THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS

AND

THE COURTING OF DINAH SHADD

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

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CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

To the address of

CAPTAIN J. MAFFLIN,

Duke of Derry's (*Pink*) *Hussars.*

Dear Mafflin,—You will remember that I wrote this story as an Awful Warning. None the less you have seen fit to disregard it and have followed Gadsby's example—as I betted you would. I acknowledge that you paid the money at once, but you have prejudiced the mind of Mrs. Mafflin against myself, for though I am almost the only respectable friend of your bachelor days, she has been *darwaza band* to me throughout the season. Further, she caused you to invite me to dinner at the Club, where you called me "a wild ass of the desert," and went home at half-past ten, after discoursing for twenty minutes on the responsibilities of housekeeping. You now drive a mail-phæton and sit under a Church of England clergyman. I am not angry, Jack. It is your *kismet*, as it was Gaddy's, and his *kismet* who can avoid? Do not think that I am moved by a spirit of revenge as I write, thus publicly, that you

and you alone are responsible for this book. In other and more expansive days, when you could look at a magnum without flushing and at a cheroot without turning white, you supplied me with most of the material. Take it back again—would that I could have preserved your fetterless speech in the telling—take it back, and by your slippered hearth read it to the late Miss Deercourt. She will not be any the more willing to receive my cards, but she will admire you immensely, and you, I feel sure, will love me. You may even invite me to another very bad dinner—at the Club, which, as you and your wife know, is a safe neutral ground for the entertainment of wild asses. Then, my very dear hypocrite, we shall be quits.

Yours always,
RUDYARD KIPLING.

P. S.—On second thoughts I should recommend you to keep the book away from Mrs. Mafflin.

POOR DEAR MAMA.

THE wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
The deer to the wholesome wold,
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
As it was in the days of old.

Gypsy Song.

SCENE.—*Interior of* MISS MINNIE THREEGAN'S *bedroom at Simla.* MISS THREEGAN, *in window-seat, turning over a drawerful of chiffons.* MISS EMMA DEERCOURT, *bosom-friend, who has come to spend the day, sitting on the bed, manipulating the bodice of a ball-room frock and a bunch of artificial lilies of the valley. Time* 5.30 P. M., *on a hot May afternoon.*

MISS DEERCOURT.—And *he* said:—"I shall *never* forget this dance," and, of course, I said:—"Oh! How *can* you be so silly!" Do you think he meant anything, dear?

MISS THREEGAN.—(*Extracting long lavender silk stocking from the rubbish.*) You know him better than *I* do.

MISS D.—Oh, *do* be sympathetic, Minnie! I'm *sure* he does. At least I *would* be sure

if he wasn't always riding with that odious Mrs. Hagan.

MISS T.—I suppose so. How *does* one manage to dance through one's heels first? Look at this—isn't it shameful? (*Spreads stocking-heel on open hand for inspection.*)

MISS D.—Never mind that! You can't mend it. Help me with this hateful bodice. I've run the string *so*, and I've run the string *so*, and I *can't* make the fulness come right. Where would you put this? (*Waves lilies of the valley.*)

MISS T.—As high up on the shoulder as possible.

MISS D.—Am I quite tall enough? I know it makes May Olger look lop-sided.

MISS T.—Yes, but May hasn't your shoulders. Hers are like a hock-bottle.

BEARER.—(*Rapping at door.*) Captain Sahib *aya*.

MISS D.—(*Jumping up wildly, and hunting for body, which she has discarded owing to the heat of the day.*) Captain Sahib! What Captain Sahib? Oh, good gracious, and I'm only half dressed! Well, I shan't bother.

MISS T.—(*Calmly.*) You needn't. It isn't for us. That's Captain Gadsby. He is going for a ride with Mama. He generally comes five days out of the seven.

AGONIZED VOICE.—(*From an inner apartment.*) Minnie, run out and give Captain Gadsby some tea, and tell him I shall be

ready in ten minutes; and, O Minnie, come to me an instant, there's a dear girl!

Miss T.—O bother! (*Aloud.*) Very well, Mama.

Exit, and reappears, after five minutes, flushed, and rubbing her fingers.

Miss D.—You look pink. What has happened?

Miss T.—(*In a stage whisper.*) A twenty-four-inch waist, and she won't let it out. Where *are* my bangles? (*Rummages on the toilet table, and dabs at her hair with a brush in the interval.*)

Miss D.—Who is this Captain Gadsby? I don't think I've met him.

Miss T.—You *must* have. He belongs to the Harrar set. I've danced with him, but I've never talked to him. He's a big yellow man, just like a newly hatched chicken, with an e-normous mustache. He walks like this (*imitates Cavalry swagger*), and he goes "Ha—Hmmm!" deep down his throat when he can't think of anything to say. Mama likes him. I don't.

Miss D.—(*Abstractedly.*) Does he wax that mustache?

Miss T.—(*Busy with powder-puff.*) Yes, I think so. Why?

Miss D.—(*Bending over the bodice and sewing furiously.*) Oh, nothing—only . . .

Miss D.—(*Sternly.*) Only what? Out with it, Emma.

MISS D.—Well, May Olger—she's engaged to Mr. Charteris, you know—said . . . Promise you won't repeat this?

MISS T.—Yes, I promise. What did she say?

MISS D.—That—that being kissed (*with a rush*) by a man who *didn't* wax his mustache was—like eating an egg without salt.

MISS T.—(*At her full height, with crushing scorn.*) May Olger is a horrid, nasty *Thing*, and you can tell her I said so. I'm glad she doesn't belong to my set . . . I must go and feed this *man!* Do I look presentable?

MISS D.—Yes, perfectly. Be quick and hand him over to your Mother, and then we can talk. *I* shall listen at the door to hear what you say to him.

MISS T.—'Sure I don't care. *I'm* not afraid of Captain Gadsby.

In proof of this swings into drawing-room with a mannish stride followed by two short steps, which produce the effect of a restive horse entering. Misses CAPTAIN GADSBY, *who is sitting in the shadow of the window-curtain, and gazes round helplessly.*

CAPTAIN GADSBY.—(*Aside.*) The filly, by Jove! Must ha' picked up that action from the sire. (*Aloud, rising.*) Good evening, Miss Threegan.

MISS T.—(*Conscious that she is flushing.*) Good evening, Captain Gadsby. Mama told me to say that she will be ready in a few

minutes. Won't you have some tea? (*Aside.*) I hope Mama will be quick. What *am* I to say to the creature? (*Aloud and abruptly.*) Milk and sugar?

CAPT. G.—No sugar, tha-anks, and very little milk. Ha-Hmmm.

MISS T.—(*Aside.*) If he's going to do that, I'm lost. I shall laugh. I *know* I shall!

CAPT. G.—(*Pulling at his mustache and watching it sideways down his nose.*) Ha-Hmmm! (*Aside.*) 'Wonder what the little beast can talk about. 'Must make a shot at it.

MISS T.—(*Aside.*) Oh, this is agonizing. I *must* say something.

BOTH TOGETHER.—Have you been . . .

CAPT. G.—I beg your pardon. You were going to say—

MISS T.—(*Who has been watching the mustache with awed fascination.*) Won't you have some eggs?

CAPT. G.—(*Looking bewilderedly at the tea-table.*) Eggs! (*Aside.*) Oh, Hades! She must have a nursery-tea at this hour. S'pose they've wiped her mouth and sent her to me while the Mother is getting on her duds. (*Aloud.*) No, thanks.

MISS T.—(*Crimson with confusion.*) Oh! I didn't mean that. I wasn't thinking of mu—eggs for an instant. I mean *salt.* Won't you have some sa—sweets? (*Aside.*)

He'll think me a raving lunatic. I wish Mama would come.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) It *was* a nursery-tea and she's ashamed of it. By Jove! She doesn't look half bad when she colors up like that. (*Aloud, helping himself from the dish.*) Have you seen those new chocolates at Peliti's?

MISS T.—No, I made these myself. What are they like?

CAPT. G.—These! *De*-licious. (*Aside.*) And that's a fact.

MISS T.—(*Aside.*) Oh, bother! He'll think I'm fishing for compliments. (*Aloud.*) No, Peliti's of course.

CAPT. G.—(*Enthusiastically.*) Not to compare with these. How d'you make them? I can't get my *khansamah* to understand the simplest thing beyond mutton and *murghi.*

MISS T.—Yes? I'm not a *khansamah*, you know. Perhaps you frighten him. You should never frighten a servant. He loses his head. It's very bad policy.

CAPT. G.—He's so awfully stupid.

MISS T.—(*Folding her hands in her lap.*) You should call him quietly and say:—"O *khansamah jee!*"

CAPT. G.—(*Getting interested.*) Yes? (*Aside.*) Fancy that little featherweight saying, "O *khansamah jee*" to my blood-thirsty Mir Khan!

MISS T.—Then you should explain the dinner, dish by dish.

CAPT. G.—But I can't speak the vernacular.

MISS T. — (*Patronizingly.*) You should pass the Higher Standard and try.

CAPT. G.—I have, but I don't seem to be any the wiser. Are you?

MISS T.—I never passed the Higher Standard. But the *khansamah* is very patient with me. He doesn't get angry when I talk about sheep's *topees*, or order *maunds* of grain when I mean *seers*.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside, with intense indignation.*) I'd like to see Mir Khan being rude to that girl! Hullo! Steady the Buffs! (*Aloud.*) And do you understand about horses, too?

MISS T.—A little—not very much. I can't doctor them, but I know what they ought to eat, and I am in charge of our stable.

CAPT. G.—Indeed! You might help me then. What ought a man to give his *sais* in the Hills? My ruffian says eight rupees, because everything is so dear.

MISS T.—Six rupees a month, and one rupee Simla allowance—neither more nor less. And a grass-cut gets six rupees. That's better than buying grass in the bazar.

CAPT. G.—(*Admiringly.*) How do you know?

MISS T.—I have tried both ways.

CAPT. G.—Do you ride much, then? I've never seen you on the Mall?

MISS T.—(*Aside.*) I haven't passed him *more* than fifty times. (*Aloud.*) Nearly every day.

CAPT. G.—By Jove! I didn't know that. Ha-Hmmm! (*Pulls at his mustaches and is silent for forty seconds.*)

MISS T.—(*Desperately, and wondering what will happen next.*) It looks beautiful. I shouldn't touch it if I were you. (*Aside.*) It's all Mama's fault for not coming before. I *will* be rude!

CAPT. G.—(*Bronzing under the tan, and bringing down his hand very quickly.*) Eh? Wha-at! Oh, yes! Ha! Ha! (*Laughs uneasily. Aside.*) Well, of *all* the dashed cheek! I never had a woman say that to me yet. She must be a cool hand or else . . . Ah! that nursery tea!

VOICE FROM THE UNKNOWN.—Tchk! Tchk! Tchk!

CAPT. G.—Good gracious! What's that?

MISS T.—The dog, I think. (*Aside.*) Emma *has* been listening, and I'll never forgive her!

CAPT. O.—(*Aside.*) They don't keep dogs here. (*Aloud.*) 'Didn't sound like a dog, did it?

MISS T.—Then it must have been the cat. Let's go into the veranda. What a lovely evening it is!

Steps into veranda and looks out across the hills into sunset. The CAPTAIN *follows.*

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Superb eyes! I wonder that I never noticed them before! (*Aloud.*) There's going to be a dance at Viceregal Lodge on Wednesday. Can you spare me one?

MISS T.—(*Shortly.*) No! I don't want any of your charity-dances. You only ask me because Mama told you to. I hop and I bump. You *know* I do!

CAPT. G. (*Aside.*) That's true, but little girls shouldn't understand these things. (*Aloud.*) No, on my word, I don't. You dance beautifully.

MISS T.—Then why do you always stand out after half a dozen turns? I thought officers in the Army didn't tell fibs.

CAPT. G.—It wasn't a fib, believe me. I really *do* want the pleasure of a dance with you.

MISS T. — (*Wickedly*). Why? Won't Mama dance with you any more?

CAPT. G.—(*More earnestly than the necessity demands.*) I wasn't thinking of your Mother. (*Aside.*) You little vixen!

MISS T.—(*Still looking out of the window.*) Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon. I was thinking of something else.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Well! I wonder what she'll say next. I've never known a woman treat *me* like this before. I might be —Dash it, I might be an Infantry subaltern! (*Aloud.*) Oh, *please* don't trouble. I'm not

worth thinking about. Isn't your Mother ready yet ?

Miss T.—I should think so ; but promise me, Captain Gadsby, you won't take poor dear Mama twice round Jakko any more. It tires her so.

Capt. G.—She says that no exercise tires her.

Miss T.—Yes, but she suffers afterwards. *You* don't know what rheumatism is, and you oughtn't to keep her out so late, when it gets chilly in the evenings.

Capt. G. — (*Aside.*) Rheumatism ! I *thought* she came off her horse rather in a bunch. Whew ! One lives and learns. (*Aloud.*) I'm sorry to hear that. She hasn't mentioned it to me.

Miss T.—(*Flurried.*) Of course not ! Poor dear Mama never would. And you mustn't say that I told you either. Promise me that you won't. Oh, Captain Gadsby, *promise* me you won't !

Capt. G.—I am dumb, or—I shall be as soon as you've given me that dance, and another . . . if you can trouble yourself to think about me for a minute.

Miss T.—But you won't like it one little bit. You'll be awfully sorry afterwards.

Capt. G.—I shall like it above all things, and I shall only be sorry that I didn't get more. (*Aside.*) Now what in the world am I saying ?

Miss T.—Very well. You will have only yourself to thank if your toes are trodden on. Shall we say Seven?

Capt. G.—And Eleven. (*Aside.*) She can't be more than eight stone, but, even then, it's an absurdly small foot. (*Looks at his own riding boots.*)

Miss T.—They're beautifully shiny. I can almost see my face in them.

Capt. G.—I was thinking whether I should have to go on crutches for the rest of my life if you trod on my toes.

Miss T.—Very likely. Why not change Eleven for a square?

Capt. G.—No, *please!* I want them both waltzes. Won't you write them down?

Miss T.—*I* don't get so many dances that I shall confuse them. *You* will be the offender.

Capt. G.—Wait and see! (*Aside.*) She doesn't dance perfectly, perhaps, but . . .

Miss T.—Your tea must have got cold by this time. Won't you have another cup?

Capt. G.—No, thanks. Don't you think it's pleasanter out in the veranda? (*Aside.*) I never saw hair take that color in the sunshine before. (*Aloud.*) It's like one of Dicksee's pictures.

Miss T.—Yes! It's a wonderful sunset, isn't it? (*Bluntly.*) But what do *you* know about Dicksee's pictures?

Capt. G.—I go Home occasionally. And

I used to know the Galleries. (*Nervously.*) You mustn't think me only a Philistine with . . . a mustache.

Miss T.—Don't! *Please* don't! I'm *so* sorry for what I said then. I was *horribly* rude. It slipped out before I thought. Don't you know the temptation to say frightful and shocking things just for the mere sake of saying them? I'm afraid I gave way to it.

Capt. G.—(*Watching the girl as she flushes.*) I *think* I know the feeling. It would be terrible if we all yielded to it, wouldn't it? For instance, I might say . . .

Poor dear Mama.—(*Entering, habited, hatted, and booted.*) Ah, Captain Gadsby! 'Sorry to keep you waiting. 'Hope you haven't been bored. 'My little girl been talking to you?

Miss T.—(*Aside.*) I'm not sorry I spoke about the rheumatism. I'm not! I'm NOT! I only wish I'd mentioned the corns too.

Capt. G.—(*Aside.*) What a shame! I wonder how old she is. It never occurred to me before. (*Aloud.*) We've been discussing "Shakespeare and the musical glasses" in the veranda.

Miss T.—(*Aside.*) Nice man! He knows that quotation. He *isn't* a Philistine with a mustache. (*Aloud.*) Good-by, Captain Gadsby. (*Aside.*) What a huge hand and *what* a squeeze! I don't suppose he meant it, but he has driven the rings into my fingers.

POOR DEAR MAMA.—Has Vermilion come round yet? Oh, yes! Captain Gadsby, don't you think that the saddle is too far forward? (*They pass into the front veranda.*)

CAPT. G—(*Aside.*) How the dickens should I know what she prefers? She told me that she doted on horses. (*Aloud.*) I think it is.

MISS T.—(*Coming out into front veranda.*) Oh! Bad Buldoo! I must speak to him for this. He has taken up the curb two links, and Vermilion hates that. (*Passes out and to horse's head.*)

CAPT. G.—Let me do it!

MISS T.—No, Vermilion understands me. Don't you, old man? (*Looses curb-chain skilfully, and pats horse on nose and throttle.*) Poor Vermilion! *Did* they want to cut his chin off? There!

CAPTAIN GADSBY *watches the interlude with undisguised admiration.*

POOR DEAR MAMA.—(*Tartly to* MISS T.) You've forgotten your guest, I think, dear.

MISS T.—Good gracious! So I have! Good-by. (*Retreats indoors hastily.*)

POOR DEAR MAMA.—(*Bunching reins in fingers hampered by too tight gauntlets.*) Captain Gadsby!

CAPT. GADSBY *stoops and makes the foot-rest.* POOR DEAR MAMA *blunders, halts too long, and breaks through it.*

CAPTAIN G.—(*Aside.*) Can't hold up

eleven stone forever. It's all your rheumatism. (*Aloud.*) Can't imagine why I was so clumsy. (*Aside.*) Now Little Featherweight would have gone up like a bird.

They ride out of the garden. The CAPTAIN *falls back.*

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) How that habit catches her under the arms! Ugh!

POOR DEAR MAMA.—(*With the worn smile of sixteen seasons, the worse for exchange.*) You're dull this afternoon, Captain Gadsby.

CAPT.—(*Spurring up wearily.*) Why did you keep me waiting so long?

Et cætera, et cætera, et cætera.

(AN INTERVAL OF THREE WEEKS.)

GILDED YOUTH.—(*Sitting on railings opposite Town Hall.*) Hullo, Gaddy! 'Been trotting out the Gorgonzola? We all thought it was the Gorgon you're mashing.

CAPT. G.—(*With withering emphasis.*) You young cub! What the —— does it matter to you?

Proceeds to read GILDED YOUTH *a lecture on discretion and deportment, which crumples latter like a Chinese Lantern. Departs fuming.*

(FURTHER INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS.)

SCENE.—*Exterior of New Library on a foggy evening.* MISS THREEGAN *and* MISS DEERCOURT *meet among the 'rickshaws.* MISS T. *is carrying a bundle of books under her left arm.*

Miss D.—(*Level intonation.*) Well?

Miss T.—(*Ascending intonation.*) Well?

Miss D.—(*Capturing her friend's left arm, taking away all the books, placing books in 'rickshaw, returning to arm, securing hand by the third finger and investigating.*) Well! you *bad* girl! And you *never* told me.

Miss T.—(*Demurely.*) He—he—he only spoke yesterday afternoon.

Miss D.—Bless you, dear! And I'm to be bridesmaid, aren't I? You *know* you promised *ever* so long ago.

Miss T.—Of course. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. (*Gets into 'rickshaw.*) Oh, Emma!

Miss D.—(*With intense interest.*) Yes, dear?

Miss T.— (*Piano.*) It's quite true . . . about . . . the . . . egg.

Miss D.—What egg?

Miss T.— (*Pianissimo prestissimo.*) The egg without the salt. (*Forte.*) *Chalo ghar ko jaldi, jhampani!*

CURTAIN.

THE WORLD WITHOUT.

"CERTAIN people of importance."

SCENE.—*Smoking-room of the Degchi Club. Time* 10.30 P. M. *of a stuffy night in the Rains. Four men dispersed in picturesque attitudes and easy-chairs. To these enter* BLAYNE *of the Irregular Moguls, in evening dress.*

BLAYNE.—Phew! The Judge ought to be hanged in his own store-godown. Hi, *khitmatgar! Poora* whisky-peg, to take the taste out of my mouth.

CURTISS.—(*Royal Artillery.*) That's it, is it? What the deuce made you dine at the Judge's? You know his *bandobust.*

BLAYNE.—'Thought it couldn't be worse than the Club; but I'll swear he buys ullaged liquor and doctors it with gin and ink. (*Looking round the room.*) Is this all of you to-night?

DOONE.—(*P. W. D.*) Anthony was called out at dinner. Mingle had a pain in his tummy.

CURTISS.—Miggy dies of cholera once a week in the Rains, and gets drunk on chloro-

dyne in between. 'Good little chap, though. Any one at the Judge's, Blayne?

BLAYNE.—Cockley and his *memsahib* looking awfully white and fagged. 'Female girl—couldn't catch the name—on her way to the Hills, under the Cockleys' charge—the Judge, and Markyn fresh from Simla—disgustingly fit.

CURTISS.—Good Lord, how truly magnificent! Was there enough ice? When I mangled garbage there I got one whole lump—nearly as big as a walnut. What had Markyn to say for himself?

BLAYNE.—'Seems that every one is having a fairly good time up there in spite of the rain. By Jove, that reminds me! I know I hadn't come across just for the pleasure of your society. News! Great news! Markyn told me.

DOONE.—Who's dead now?

BLAYNE.—No one that I know of; but Gaddy's hooked at last!

DROPPING CHORUS.—How much? The Devil! Markyn was pulling your leg. Not GADDY!

BLAYNE.—"Yea, verily, verily, verily! Verily, verily, I say unto thee." Theodore, the gift o' God! Our Phillup! It's been given out up above.

MACKESY.—(*Barrister-at-law.*) Huh! Women will give out anything. What does accused say?

BLAYNE.—Markyn told me that he congratulated him warily—one hand held out,

t'other ready to guard. Gaddy turned pink and said it was so.

CURTISS.—Poor old Gaddy! They all do it. Who's *she?* Let's hear the details.

BLAYNE.—She's a girl—daughter of a Colonel Somebody.

DOONE.—Simla's stiff with Colonels' daughters. Be more explicit.

BLAYNE.—Wait a shake. What *was* her name? Three—something. Three—

CURTISS.—Stars, perhaps. Gaddy knows *that* brand.

BLAYNE.—Threegan—Minnie Threegan.

MACKESY.—Threegan! Isn't she a little bit of a girl with red hair?

BLAYNE.—'Bout that—from what Markyn said.

MACKESY.—Then I've met her. She was at Lucknow last season. 'Owned a permanently juvenile Mama, and danced damnably. I say, Jervoise, you knew the Threegans, didn't you?

JERVOISE.—(*Civilian of twenty-five years' service, waking up from his doze.*) Eh! What's that? Knew who? How? I thought I was at Home, confound you!

MACKESY.—The Threegan girl's engaged, so Blayne says.

JERVOISE.—(*Slowly.*) Engaged—engaged! Bless my soul! I'm getting an old man! Little Minnie Threegan engaged! It was only the other day I went home with them in the *Surat*

—no, the *Massilia*—and she was crawling about on her hands and knees among the *ayahs*. 'Used to call me the "*Tick Tack Sahib*" because I showed her my watch. And that was in Sixty-Seven—no, Seventy. Good God, how time flies! I'm an old man. I remember when Threegan married Miss Derwent—daughter of old Hooky Derwent—but that was before your time. And so the little baby's engaged to have a little baby of her own! Who's the other fool?

MACKESY.—Gadsby of the Pink Hussars.

JERVOISE.—'Never met him. Threegan lived in debt, married in debt, and'll die in debt. 'Must be glad to get the girl off his hands.

BLAYNE.—Gaddy has money—lucky devil. Place at Home, too.

DOONE.—He comes of first-class stock. 'Can't quite understand his being caught by a Colonel's daughter, and (*looking cautiously round room*) Black Infantry at that! No offense to you, Blayne.

BLAYNE—(*Stiffly.*) Not much, tha-anks.

CURTISS.—(*Quoting motto of Irregular Moguls.*) "We are what we are," eh, old man? But Gaddy was such a superior animal as a rule. Why didn't he go Home and pick his wife there?

MACKESY.—They are all alike when they come to the turn into the straight. About thirty a man begins to get sick of living alone—

CURTISS.—And of the eternal muttony-chop in the morning.

DOONE.—It's dead goat as a rule, but go on, Mackesy.

MACKESY.—If a man's once taken that way nothing will hold him. Do you remember Benoit of your service, Doone? They transferred him to Tharanda when his time came, and he married a plate-layer's daughter, or something of that kind. She was the only female about the place.

DOONE.—Yes, poor brute. That smashed Benoit's chances altogether. Mrs. Benoit used to ask:—"Was you goin' to the dance this evenin'?"

CURTISS.—Hang it all! Gaddy hasn't married beneath him. There's no tar-brush in the family, I suppose.

JERVOISE.—Tar-brush! Not an anna. You young fellows talk as though the man was doing the girl an honor in marrying her. You're all too conceited—nothing's good enough for you.

BLAYNE.—Not even an empty Club, a dam' bad dinner at the Judge's, and a Station as sickly as a hospital. You're quite right. We're a set of Sybarites.

DOONE.—Luxurious dogs, wallowing in—

CURTISS. — Prickly heat between the shoulders. I'm covered with it. Let's hope Beora will be cooler.

BLAYNE.—Whew! Are *you* ordered into

camp, too? I thought the Gunners had a clean sheet.

CURTISS.—No, worse luck. Two cases yesterday—one died—and if we have a third, out we go. Is there any shooting at Beora, Doone?

DOONE.—The country's under water, except the patch by the Grand Trunk Road. I was there yesterday, looking at a *bund*, and came across four poor devils in their last stage. It's rather bad from here to Kuchara.

CURTISS.—Then we're pretty certain to have a heavy go of it. Heigho! I shouldn't mind changing places with Gaddy for a while. 'Sport with Amaryllis in the shade of the Town Hall, and all that. Oh, why doesn't somebody come and marry me, instead of letting me go into cholera camp?

MACKESY—(*Pointing to notice forbidding dogs in the Club.*) Ask the Committee.

CURTISS. — You irreclaimable ruffian! You'll stand me another peg for that. Blayne, what will you take? Mackesy is fined on moral grounds. Doone, have you any preference?

DOONE. — Small glass Kümmel, please. Excellent carminative, these days. Anthony told me so.

MACKESY—(*Signing voucher for four drinks.*) Most unfair punishment. I only thought of Curtiss as Actæon being chivied round the billiard tables by the nymphs of Diana.

BLAYNE.—Curtiss would have to import his nymphs by train. Mrs. Cockley's the only woman in the Station. She won't leave Cockley, and he's doing his best to get her to go.

CURTISS.—Good, indeed! Here's Mrs. Cockley's health. To the only wife in the Station and a damned brave woman!

OMNES—(*Drinking.*) A damned brave woman!

BLAYNE.—I suppose Gaddy will bring his wife here at the end of the cold weather. They are going to be married almost immediately, I believe.

CURTISS.—Gaddy may thank his luck that the Pink Hussars are all detachment and no headquarters this hot weather, or he'd be torn from the arms of his love as sure as death. Have you ever noticed the thorough-minded way British Cavalry takes to cholera? It's because they are so expensive. If the Pinks had stood fast here, they would have been out in camp a month ago. Yes, I should decidedly like to be Gaddy.

MACKESY.—He'll go Home after he's married, and send in his papers—see if he doesn't.

BLAYNE.—Why shouldn't he? Hasn't he money? Would any of us be here if we weren't paupers?

DOONE.—Poor old pauper! What has become of the six hundred you rooked from our table last month?

BLAYNE.—It took unto itself wings. I think an enterprising tradesman got some of it, and a *shroff* gobbled the rest—or else I spent it.

CURTISS.—Gaddy never had dealings with a *shroff* in his life.

DOONE.—Virtuous Gaddy! If *I* had three thousand a month, paid from England, I don't think I'd deal with a *shroff* either.

MACKESY—(*Yawning.*) Oh, it's a sweet life! I wonder whether matrimony would make it sweeter.

CURTISS.—Ask Cockley — with his wife dying by inches!

BLAYNE.—Go home and get a fool of a girl to come out to—what is it Thackeray says?—"the splendid palace of an Indian pro-consul."

DOONE.—Which reminds me. My quarters leak like a sieve. I had fever last night from sleeping in a swamp. And the worst of it is, one can't do anything to a roof till the Rains are over.

CURTISS.—What's wrong with you? *You* haven't eighty rotting Tommies to take into a running stream.

DOONE.—No: but I'm a compost of boils and bad language. I'm a regular Job all over my body. It's sheer poverty of blood, and I don't see any chance of getting richer—either way.

BLAYNE.—Can't you take leave?

DOONE.—That's the pull you Army men have over us. Ten days are nothing in your sight. *I'm* so important that Government can't find a substitute if I go away. Ye-es, I'd like to be Gaddy, whoever his wife may be.

CURTISS.—You've passed the turn of life that Mackesy was speaking of.

DOONE.—Indeed I have, but I never yet had the brutality to ask a woman to share my life out here.

BLAYNE.—On my soul I believe you're right. I'm thinking of Mrs. Cockley. The woman's an absolute wreck.

DOONE.—Exactly. Because she stays down here. The only way to keep her fit would be to send her to the Hills for eight months—and the same with any woman. I fancy I see myself taking a wife on those terms.

MACKESY.—With the rupee at one and sixpence. The little Doones would be little Dehra Doones, with a fine Mussoorie *chi-chi* to bring home for the holidays.

CURTISS.—And a pair of be-ewtiful *sam bhur*-horns for Doone to wear, free of expense, presented by—

DOONE.—Yes, it's an enchanting prospect. By the way, the rupee hasn't done falling yet. The time will come when we shall think ourselves lucky if we only lose half our pay.

CURTISS.—Surely a third's loss enough

Who gains by the arrangement? That's what I want to know.

BLAYNE.—The Silver Question! I'm going to bed if you begin squabbling. Thank Goodness, here's Anthony—looking like a ghost.

Enter Anthony, Indian Medical Staff, very white and tired.

ANTHONY.—'Evening, Blayne. It's raining in sheets. *Peg lao, khitmatgar.* The roads are something ghastly.

CURTISS.—How's Mingle?

ANTHONY.—Very bad, and more frightened. I handed him over to Fewton. Mingle might just as well have called him in the first place, instead of bothering me.

BLAYNE.—He's a nervous little chap. What has he got this time?

ANTHONY.—Can't quite say. A very bad tummy and a blue funk so far. He asked me at once if it was cholera, and I told him not to be a fool. That soothed him.

CURTISS—Poor devil! The funk does half the business in a man of that build.

ANTHONY.—(*Lighting a cheroot.*) I firmly believe the funk will kill him if he stays down. You know the amount of trouble he's been giving Fewton for the last three weeks. He's doing his very best to frighten himself into the grave.

GENERAL CHORUS.—Poor little devil! Why doesn't he get away?

ANTHONY.—'Can't. He has his leave all

right, but he's so dipped he can't take it, and I don't think his name on paper would raise four annas. That's in confidence, hough.

MACKESY.—All the Station knows it.

ANTHONY.—" I suppose I shall have to die here," he said, squirming all across the bed. He's quite made up his mind to Kingdom Come. And I *know* he has nothing more than a wet-weather tummy if he could only keep a hand on himself.

BLAYNE.—That's bad. That's *very* bad. Poor little Miggy. Good little chap, too. I say—

ANTHONY.—What do you say?

BLAYNE.—Well, look here—anyhow. If it's like that—as you say—I say fifty.

CURTISS.—I say fifty.

MACKESY.—I go twenty better.

DOONE.—Bloated Crœsus of the Bar! I say fifty. Jervoise, what do you say? Hi! Wake up!

JERVOISE.—Eh! What's that? What's that?

CURTISS.—We want a hundred dibs from you. You're a bachelor drawing a gigantic income, and there's a man in a hole.

JERVOISE.—What man? Any one dead?

BLAYNE.—No, but he'll die if you don't give the hundred. Here! Here's a peg-voucher. You can see what we've signed for, and a *chaprassi* will come round to-morrow to collect it. So there will be no trouble.

JERVOISE—(*signing*). One hundred, E. M. J. There you are. (*Feebly.*) It isn't one of your jokes, is it?

BLAYNE.—No, it really *is* wanted. Anthony, you were the biggest poker-winner last week, and you've defrauded the tax-collector too long. Sign!

ANTHONY.—Let's see. Three fifties and a seventy—two twenty—three twenty—say four twenty. That'll give him a month clear at the Hills. Many thanks, you men. I'll send round the *chaprassi* to-morrow.

CURTISS.—You must engineer his taking the stuff, and of course you mustn't—

ANTHONY.—*Of* course. It would never do. He'd weep with gratitude over his evening drink.

BLAYNE.—That's just what he would do, damn him. Oh! I say, Anthony, you pretend to know everything. Have you heard about Gaddy?

ANTHONY.—No. Divorce Court at last?

BLAYNE.—Worse. He's engaged.

ANTHONY.—How much? He *can't* be!

BLAYNE.—He *is*. He's going to be married in a few weeks. Markyn told me at the Judge's this evening. It's *pukka*.

ANTHONY.—You don't say so? Holy Moses! There'll be a shine in the tents of Kedar.

CURTISS.—'Regiment cut up rough, think you?

ANTHONY.—'Don't know anything about the Regiment.

MACKESY.—It is bigamy, then?

ANTHONY.—Maybe. Do you mean to say that you men have forgotten or is there more charity in the world than I thought?

DOONE.—You don't look pretty when you are trying to keep a secret. You bloat. Explain.

ANTHONY.—Mrs. Herriott!

BLAYNE—(*After a long pause, to the room generally*). It's my notion that we are a set of fools.

MACKESY.—Nonsense. *That* business was knocked on the head last season. Why, young Mallard—

ANTHONY.—Mallard was a candlestick, paraded as such. Think a while. Recollect last season and the talk then. Mallard or no Mallard, did Gaddy ever talk to any other woman?

CURTISS.—There's something in that. It *was* slightly noticeable now you come to mention it. But she's at Naini Tal and he's at Simla.

ANTHONY.—He had to go to Simla to look after a globle-trotter relative of his—a person with a title. Uncle or aunt.

BLAYNE.—And there he got engaged. No law prevents a man growing tired of a woman.

ANTHONY.—Except that he mustn't do it till

the woman is tired of him. And the Herriott woman was not that.

CURTISS.—She may be now. Two months of Naini Tal work wonders.

DOONE.—Curious thing how some women carry a Fate with them. There was a Mrs. Deegie in the Central Provinces whose men invariably fell away and got married. It became a regular proverb with us when I was down there. I remember three men desperately devoted to her, and they all, one after another, took wives.

CURTISS.—That's odd. Now I should have thought that Mrs. Deegie's influence would have led them to take other men's wives. It ought to have made them afraid of the judgment of Providence.

ANTHONY.—Mrs. Herriott will make Gaddy afraid of something more than the judgment of Providence, I fancy.

BLAYNE.—Supposing things are as you say, he'll be a fool to face her. He'll sit tight at Simla.

ANTHONY.—'Shouldn't be a bit surprised if he went off to Naini to explain. He's an unaccountable sort of man, and she's likely to be a more than unaccountable woman.

DOONE.—What makes you take her character away so confidently?

ANTHONY.—*Primum tempus.* Gaddy was her first, and a woman doesn't allow her first man to drop away without expostulation. She

justifies the first transfer of affection to herself by swearing that it is forever and ever. Consequently . . .

BLAYNE.—Consequently, we are sitting here till past one o'clock, talking scandal like a set of Station cats. Anthony, it's all your fault. We were perfectly respectable till you came in. Go to bed. I'm off. Good night all.

CURTISS.—Past one! It's past two, by Jove, and here's the *khit* coming for the late charge. Just Heavens! One, two, three, four, *five* rupees to pay for the pleasure of saying that a poor little beast of a woman is no better than she should be. I'm ashamed of myself. Go to bed, you slanderous villains, and if I'm sent to Beora to-morrow, be prepared to hear I'm dead before paying my card-account!

CURTAIN.

THE TENTS OF KEDAR.

ONLY why should it be with pain at all,
Why must I 'twixt the leaves of coronal
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why should the other women know so much,
And talk together:—Such the look and such
The smile he used to love with, then as now.
Any Wife to any Husband.

SCENE.—*A Naini Tal dinner for thirty-four. Plate, wines, crockery, and khitmatgars carefully calculated to scale of Rs.* 6,000 *per mensem, less exchange. Table split lengthways by banks of flowers.*

MRS. HERRIOTT.—(*After conversation has risen to proper pitch.*) Ah! 'Didn't see you in the crush in the drawing-room. (*Sotto voce.*) Where *have* you been all this while, Pip?

CAPTAIN GADSBY.—(*Turning from regularly ordained dinner partner and settling hock glasses.*) Good evening. (*Sotto voce.*) Not quite so loud another time. You've no notion how your voice carries. (*Aside.*) So much for shirking the written explanation. It'll have to be a verbal one now. Sweet

prospect! How on earth am I to tell her that I am a respectable, engaged member of society and it's all over between us?

MRS. H.—I've a heavy score against you. Where were you at the Monday Pop? Where were you on Tuesday? Where were you at the Lamonts' tennis? I was looking everywhere.

Capt. G.—For me? Oh, I was alive somewhere, I suppose. (*Aside.*) It's for Minnie's sake, but it's going to be dashed unpleasant.

MRS. H.—Have I done anything to offend you? I never meant it if I have. I couldn't help going for a ride with the Vaynor man. It was promised a week before you came up.

CAPT. G.—I didn't know—

MRS. H.—It really *was*.

CAPT. G.—Anything about it, I mean.

MRS. H.—What has upset you to-day? All these days? You haven't been near me for four whole days—nearly one hundred hours. Was it *kind* of you, Pip? And I've been looking forward so much to your coming.

CAPT. G.—Have you?

MRS. H.—You *know* I have! I've been as foolish as a schoolgirl about it. I made a little calendar and put it in my card-case, and every time the twelve o'clock gun went off I scratched out a square and said:—"That brings me nearer to Pip. *My* Pip!"

CAPT. G.—(*With an uneasy laugh.*) What will Mackler think if you neglect him so ?

MRS. H.—And it hasn't brought you nearer. You seem farther away than ever. Are you sulking about something ? I know your temper.

CAPT. G.—No.

MRS. H.—Have I grown old in the last few months, then ? (*Reaches forward to bank of flowers for menu-card.*)

PARTNER ON LEFT.—Allow me. (*Hands menu-card.* MRS. H. *keeps her arm at full stretch for three seconds.*)

MRS. H.—(*To partner.*) Oh, thanks. I didn't see. (*Turns right again.*) Is anything in me changed at all ?

CAPT. G.—For Goodness' sake go on with your dinner ! You must eat something. Try one of those cutlet arrangements. (*Aside.*) And I fancied she had good shoulders, once upon a time ! What an ass a man can make of himself !

MRS. H.—(*Helping herself to a paper frill, seven peas, some stamped carrots and a spoonful of gravy.*) That isn't an answer. Tell we whether I have done anything.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) If it isn't ended here there will be a ghastly scene somewhere else. If only I'd written to her and stood the racket —at long range ! (*To khitmatgar.*) *Han ! Simpkin do.* (*Aloud.*) I'll tell you later on.

MRS. H.—Tell me *now.* It must be some

foolish misunderstanding, and you know that there was to be nothing of that sort between us! *We*, of all people in the world, can't afford it. Is it the Vaynor man, and don't you like to say so? On my honor—

CAPT. G.—I haven't given the Vaynor man a thought.

MRS. H.—But how d'you know that *I* haven't?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Here's my chance and may the Devil help me through with it. (*Aloud and measuredly.*) Believe me, I do not care how often or how tenderly you think of the Vaynor man.

MRS. H.—I wonder if you mean that.—Oh, what *is* the good of squabbling and pretending to misunderstand when you are only up for so short a time? Pip, don't be a stupid!

Follows a pause, during which he crosses his left leg over his right and continues his dinner.

CAPT. G.—(*In answer to the thunderstorm in her eyes.*) Corns—my worst.

MRS. H.—Upon my word, you are the very rudest man in the world! I'll *never* do it again.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) No, I don't think you will; but I wonder what you will do before it's all over. (*To khitmatgar.*) *Thorah our Simpkin do.*

MRS. H.—Well! Haven't you the grace to apologize, bad man?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) I mustn't let it drift

back *now*. Trust a woman for being as blind as a bat when she won't see.

MRS. H.—I'm waiting : or would you like me to dictate a form of apology ?

CAPT. G.—(*Desperately.*) By all means dictate.

MRS. H.—(*Lightly.*) Very well. Rehearse your several Christian names after me and go on :—" Profess my sincere repentance."

CAPT. G.—" Sincere repentance."

MRS. H.—" For having behaved—"

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) At last ! I wish to Goodness she'd look away. " For having behaved "—as I have behaved, and declare that I am thoroughly and heartily sick of the whole business, and take this opportunity of making clear my intention of ending it, now, henceforward, and forever. (*Aside.*) If any one had told me I should be such a blackguard . . . !

MRS. H.—(*Shaking a spoonful of potato-chips into her plate.*) That's not a pretty joke.

CAPT. G.—No. It's a reality. (*Aside.*) I wonder if smashes of this kind are always so raw.

MRS. H.—Really, Pip, you're getting more absurd every day.

CAPT. G.—I don't think you quite understand me. Shall I repeat it ?

MRS. H.—No ! For pity's sake don't do that. It's too terrible, even in fun.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) I'll let her think it

over for a while. But I ought to be horse-whipped.

MRS. H.—I want to know what you meant by what you said just now.

CAPT. G.—Exactly what I said. No less.

MRS. H.—But what have I done to deserve it? What *have* I done?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) If she only wouldn't look at me. (*Aloud and very slowly, his eyes on his plate.*) D'you remember that evening in July, before the Rains broke, when you said that the end would have to come sooner or later . . . and you wondered for which of us it would come first?

MRS. H.—Yes! I was only joking. And you swore that, as long as there was breath in your body, it should *never* come. And I believed you.

CAPT. G.—(*Fingering menu-card.*) Well, it has. That's all.

A long pause, during which MRS. H. *bows her head and rolls the bread-twist into little pellets:* G. *stares at the oleanders.*

MRS. H.—(*Throwing back her head and laughing naturally.*) They train us women well, don't they, Pip?

CAPT. G.—(*Brutally, touching shirt-stud.*) So far as the expression goes. (*Aside.*) It isn't in her nature to take things quietly. There'll be an explosion yet.

MRS. H.—(*With a shudder.*) Thank you. B-but red Indians allow people to wriggle

when they're being tortured, I believe. (*Slips fan from girdle and fans slowly: rim of fan level with chin.*)

PARTNER ON LEFT.—Very close to-night, isn't it? You find it too much for you?

MRS. H.—Oh, no, not in the least. But they really ought to have punkahs, even in your cool Naini Tal, oughtn't they? (*Turns, dropping fan and raising eyebrows.*)

CAPT. G.—It's all right. (*Aside.*) Here comes the storm!

MRS. H.—(*Her eyes on the tablecloth: fan ready in right hand.*) It was very cleverly managed, Pip, and I congratulate you. You swore—you never contented yourself with merely saying a thing—you *swore* that, as far as lay in your power, you'd make my wretched life pleasant for me. And you've denied me the consolation of breaking down. I should have done it—indeed I should. A woman would hardly have thought of this refinement, my kind, considerate friend. (*Fan-guard as before.*) You have explained things so tenderly and truthfully, too! You haven't spoken or written a word of warning, and you have let me believe in you till the last minute. You haven't condescended to give me your *reason* yet. No! A woman could not have managed it half so well. Are there many *men* like you in the world?

CAPT. G.—I'm sure I don't know. (*To khitmatgar.*) Ohé! *Simpkin do.*

MRS. H.—You call yourself a man of the world, don't you? Do men of the world behave like Devils when they do a woman the honor to get tired of her?

CAPT. G.—I'm sure I don't know. Don't speak so loud!

MRS. H.—Keep us respectable, O Lord, whatever happens! Don't be afraid of my compromising you. You've chosen your ground far too well, and I've been properly brought up. (*Lowering fan.*) Haven't you *any* pity, Pip, except for yourself?

CAPT. G.—Wouldn't it be rather impertinent of me to say that I'm sorry for you?

MRS. H.—I think you have said it once or twice before. You're growing very careful of my feelings. My God, Pip, I was a good woman once! You *said* I was. You've made me what I am. What are you going to do with me? What are you going to do with me? Won't you *say* that you are sorry? (*Helps herself to iced asparagus.*)

CAPT. G.—I am sorry for you, if you want the pity of such a brute as I am. I'm *awf'ly* sorry for you.

MRS. H.—Rather tame for a man of the world. Do you think that that admission clears you?

CAPT. G.—What can I do? I can only tell you what I think of myself. You can't think worse than that?

MRS. H.—Oh, yes, I can! And now, will you tell me the reason of all this? Remorse? Has Bayard been suddenly conscience-stricken?

CAPT. G.—(*Angrily, his eyes still lowered.*) No! The thing has come to an end on my side. That's all. *Mafisch!*

MRS. H.—"That's all. *Mafisch!*" As though I were a Cairene Dragoman. You used to make prettier speeches. D'you remember when you said . . . ?

CAPT. G.—For Heaven's sake don't bring that back! Call me anything you like and I'll admit it—

MRS. H.—But you don't care to be reminded of old lies? If I could hope to hurt you one-tenth as much as you have hurt me to-night . . . No, I wouldn't—I couldn't do it—liar though you are.

CAPT. G.—I've spoken the truth.

MRS. H.—My *dear* Sir, you flatter yourself. You have lied over the reason. Pip, remember that I know you as you don't know yourself. You have been everything to me, though you are . . . (*Fan-guard.*) Oh, what a contemptible *Thing* it is! And so you are merely tired of me?

CAPT. G.—Since you insist upon my repeating it—Yes.

MRS. H.—Lie the first. I wish I knew a coarser word. Lie seems so ineffectual in your case. The fire has just died out and

there is no fresh one? Think for a minute, Pip, if you care whether I despise you more than I do. Simply *Mafisch*, is it?

CAPT. G.—Yes. (*Aside.*) I think I deserve this.

MRS. H.—Lie number two. Before the next glass chokes you, tell me her name.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) I'll make her pay for dragging Minnie into the business! (*Aloud.*) Is it likely?

MRS. H.—*Very* likely if you thought that it would flatter your vanity. You'd cry my name on the housetops to make people turn round.

CAPT. G.—I wish I had. There would have been an end of this business.

MRS. H.—Oh, no, there would not. . . . And so you were going to be virtuous and *blasé*, were you? To come to me and say:—"I've done with you. The incident is clo-osed." I ought to be proud of having kept such a man so long.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) It only remains to pray for the end of the dinner. (*Aloud.*) You know what I think of myself.

MRS. H.—As it's the only person in the world you ever *do* think of, and as I know your mind thoroughly, I do. You want to get it all over and. . . . Oh, I can't keep you back! And you're going—think of it. Pip—to throw me over for another woman. And you swore that all other women were . . . Pip, my Pip!

She *can't* care for you as I do. Believe me, she can't. Is it any one that I know?

CAPT. G. — Thank Goodness it isn't. (*Aside.*) I expected a cyclone, but not an earthquake.

MRS. H.—She *can't!* Is there anything that I wouldn't do for you—or haven't done? And to think that I should take this trouble over you, knowing what you are! Do you despise me for it?

CAPT. G.—(*Wiping his mouth to hide a smile.*) *Again?* It's entirely a work of charity on your part.

MRS. H.—Ahhh! But I have no right to resent it. . . . Is she better-looking than I? Who was it said—?

CAPT. G.—No—not that!

MRS. H.—I'll be more merciful than you were. Don't you know that all women are alike?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Then this is the exception that proves the rule.

MRS. H.—*All* of them! I'll tell you anything you like. I will, upon my word! They only want the admiration—from anybody—no matter who—anybody! But there is always *one* man that they care for more than any one else in the world, and would sacrifice all the others to. Oh, *do* listen! I've kept the Vaynor man trotting after me like a poodle, and he believes that he is the only man I am interested in. I'll tell you what he said to me.

CAPT. G.—Spare him. (*Aside.*) I wonder what *his* version is.

MRS. H.—He's been waiting for me to look at him all through dinner. Shall I do it, and you can see what an idiot he looks?

CAPT. G.—"But what imports the nomination of this gentleman?"

MRS. H.—Watch! (*Sends a glance to the Vaynor man, who tries vainly to combine a mouthful of ice-pudding, a smirk of self-satisfaction, a glare of intense devotion, and the stolidity of a British dining countenance.*)

CAPT G.—(*Critically.*) He doesn't look pretty. Why didn't you wait till the spoon was out of his mouth?

MRS. H.—To amuse you. She'll make an exhibition of you as I've made of him; and people will laugh at you. Oh, Pip, can't you *see* that? It's as plain as the noonday sun. You'll be trotted about and told lies, and made a fool of like the others. *I* never made a fool of you, did I?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) What a clever little woman it is!

MRS. H.—Well, what have you to say?

CAPT. G.—I feel better.

MRS. H.—Yes, I suppose so, after I have come down to your level. I couldn't have done it if I hadn't cared for you so much. I have spoken the truth.

CAPT. G.—It doesn't alter the situation.

MRS. H.—(*Passionately.*) Then she *has*

said that she cares for you! Don't believe her, Pip. It's a lie—as black as yours to me!

CAPT. G.—Sssteady! I've a notion that a friend of yours is looking at you.

MRS. H.—He! I *hate* him. He introduced you to me.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) And some people would like women to assist in making the laws. Introduction to imply condonement. (*Aloud.*) Well, you see, if you can remember so far back as that, I couldn't, in common politeness, refuse the offer.

MRS. H.—In common politeness! We have got beyond *that!*

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Old ground means fresh trouble. (*Aloud.*) On my honor—

MRS. H.—Your *what?* Ha, ha!

CAPT. G.—Dishonor, then. She's not what you imagine. I meant to—

MRS. H.—Don't tell me anything about her! She *won't* care for you, and when you come back, after having made an exhibition of yourself, you'll find me occupied with—

CAPT. G.—(*Insolently.*) You couldn't while I am alive. (*Aside.*) If that doesn't bring her pride to her rescue, nothing will.

MRS. H.—(*Drawing herself up.*) Couldn't do it? *I?* (*Softening.*) You're right. I don't believe I could—though you are what you are—a coward and a liar in grain.

CAPT. G.—It doesn't hurt so much after your little lecture—with demonstrations.

MRS. H.—One mass of vanity! Will nothing *ever* touch you in this life? There must be a Hereafter if it's only for the benefit of . . . But you will have it all to yourself.

CAPT. G.—(*Under his eyebrows.*) Are you so certain of that?

MRS. H.—I shall have had mine in this life; and it will serve me right.

CAPT. G.—But the admiration that you insisted on so strongly a moment ago? (*Aside.*) Oh, I *am* a brute!

MRS. H.—(*Fiercely*). Will *that* console me for knowing that you will go to her with the same words, the same arguments, and the—the same pet names you used to me? And if she cares for you, you two will laugh over my story. Won't that be punishment heavy enough even for me—even for me? . . . And it's all useless. That's another punishment.

CAPT. G.—(*Feebly.*) Oh, come! I'm not so low as you think.

MRS. H.—Not now, perhaps, but you will be. Oh, Pip, if a woman flatters your vanity, there's nothing on earth that you would not tell her; and no meanness that you would not do. Have I known you so long without knowing that?

CAPT. G.—If you can trust me in nothing else—and I don't see why I should be trusted—you can count upon my holding my tongue.

MRS. H.—If you denied everything you've said this evening and declared it was all in fun

(*a long pause*), I'd trust you. Not otherwise. All I ask is, don't tell her my name. *Please* don't. A man might forget: a woman never would. (*Looks up table and sees hostess beginning to collect eyes.*) So it's all ended, through no fault of mine. . . . Haven't I behaved beautifully? I've accepted your dismissal, and you managed it as cruelly as you could, and I have made you respect my sex, haven't I? (*Arranging gloves and fan.*) I only pray that she'll know you some day as I know you now. I wouldn't be you then, for I think even your conceit will be hurt. I hope she'll pay you back the humiliation you've brought on me. I hope. . . . No. I don't. I *can't* give you up! I must have something to look forward to or I shall go crazy. When it's all over, come back to me, come back to me, and you'll find that you're my Pip still!

CAPT. G.—(*Very clearly.*) 'False move, and you pay for it. It's a girl!

MRS. H.—(*Rising.*) Then it *was* true! They said . . . but I wouldn't insult you by asking. A girl! *I* was a girl not very long ago. Be good to her Pip. I dare say she believes in you.

Goes out with an uncertain smile. He watches her through the door, and settles into a chair as the men redistribute themselves.

CAPT. G.—Now, if there is any Power who looks after this world, will He kindly tell me what I have done? (*Reaching out for the claret, and half aloud.*) What *have* I done?

WITH ANY AMAZEMENT.

"AND are not afraid with any amazement."
Marriage Service.

SCENE.—*A bachelor's bedroom—toilet-table arranged with unnatural neatness. Captain Gadsby asleep and snoring heavily. Time,* 10.30. A. M.—*a glorious autumn day at Simla. Enter delicately Captain Mafflin of Gadsby's regiment. Looks at sleeper, and shakes his head murmuring "Poor Gaddy." Performs violent fantasia with hair-brushes on chair-back.*

Capt. M.—Wake up, my sleeping beauty! (*Howls.*)

"Uprouse ye, then, my merry merry men!
It is our opening day!
It is our opening da-ay!"

Gaddy, the little dicky-birds have been billing and cooing for ever so long; and I'm here!

CAPT. G. — (*Sitting up and yawning.*) 'Mornin'. This is awf'ly good of you, old fellow. Most awf'ly good of you. Don't know what I should do without you. 'Pon

my soul, I don't. 'Haven't slept a wink all night.

CAPT. M.—I didn't get in till half-past eleven. 'Had a look at you then, and you seemed to be sleeping as soundly as a condemned criminal.

CAPT. G.—Jack, if you want to make those disgustingly worn-out jokes, you 'd better go away. (*With portentous gravity.*) It's the happiest day in my life.

CAPT. M.—(*Chuckling grimly.*) Not by a very long chalk, my son. You're going through some of the most refined torture you've ever known. But be calm. *I* am with you. 'Shun. *Dress!*

CAPT. G.—Eh! Wha-at?

CAPT. M.—*Do* you suppose that you are your own master for the next twelve hours? If you *do*, of course . . . (*Makes for the door.*)

CAPT. G.—No! For Goodness' sake, old man, don't do that! You'll see me through, won't you? I've been mugging up that beastly drill, and can't remember a line of it.

CAPT. M.—(*Overhauling G.'s uniform.*)—Go and tub. Don't bother me. I'll give you ten minutes to dress in.

Interval, filled by the noise as of a healthy grampus splashing in the bath-room.

CAPT. G.—(*Emerging from dressing-room.*) What time is it?

CAPT. M.—Nearly eleven.

CAPT. G.—Five hours more. O Lord!

CAPT. M.—(*Aside.*) 'First sign of funk, that. 'Wonder if it's going to spread. (*Aloud.*) Come along to breakfast.

CAPT. G.—I can't eat anything. I don't want any breakfast.

CAPT. M.—(*Aside.*) So early! (*Aloud.*) Captain Gadsby, I *order* you to eat breakfast, and a dashed good breakfast, too. None of your bridal airs and graces with me!

Leads G. down-stairs, and stands over him while he eats two chops.

CAPT. G.—(*Who has looked at his watch thrice in the last five minutes.*) What time is it?

CAPT. M.—Time to come for a walk. Light up.

CAPT. G.—I haven't smoked for ten days, and I won't *now.* (*Takes cheroot which M. has cut for him, and blows smoke through his nose luxuriously.*) We aren't going down the Mall, are we?

CAPT. M.—(*Aside.*) They're all alike in these stages. (*Aloud.*) No, my Vestal. We're going along the quietest road we can find.

CAPT. G.—Any chance of seeing Her?

CAPT. M.—Innocent! No! Come along, and, if you want me for the final obsequies, don't cut my eye out with your stick.

CAPT. G.—(*Spinning round.*) I say, isn't She the dearest creature that ever walked? What's the time? What comes after "wilt thou take this woman?"

CAPT. M.—You go for the ring. R'collect it'll be on the top of my right-hand little finger, and just be careful how you draw it off, because I shall have the Verger's fees somewhere in my glove.

CAPT. G.—(*Walking forward hastily.*)—D—— the Verger! Come along! It's past twelve, and I haven't seen Her since yesterday evening. (*Spinning round again.*) She's an absolute angel, Jack, and she's a dashed deal too good for me. Look here, does she come up the aisle on my arm, or how?

CAPT. M.—If I thought that there was the least chance of your remembering anything for two consecutive minutes, I'd tell you. Stop passaging about like that!

CAPT. G.—(*Halting in the middle of the road.*) I say, Jack.

CAPT. M.—Keep quiet for another ten minutes if you can, you lunatic, and *walk!*

The two tramp at five miles an hour for fifteen minutes.

CAPT. G.—What's the time? How about that cursed wedding-cake and the slippers? They don't throw 'em about in church do they?

CAPT. M.—In-variably. The Padre leads off with his boots.

CAPT. G.—Confound your silly soul! Don't make fun of me. I can't stand it, and I won't!

CAPT. M. — (*Untroubled.*) So-ooo, old

horse! You'll have to sleep for a couple of hours this afternoon.

CAPT. G. — (*Spinning round.*) I'm *not* going to be treated like a dashed child. Understand that!

CAPT. M.—(*Aside.*) Nerves gone to fiddle-strings. What a day we're having. (*Tenderly putting his hand on G.'s shoulder.*) My David, how long have you known this Jonathan? Would I come up here to make a fool of you—after all these years?

CAPT. G.—(*Penitently.*) I know, I know, Jack—but I'm as upset as I can be. Don't mind what I say. Just hear me run through the drill and see if I've got it all right:

"To have and to hold for better or worse, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end so help me, God.—Amen."

CAPT. M. — (*Suffocating with suppressed laughter.*) Yes. That's about the gist of it. I'll prompt if you get into a hat.

CAPT. G. (*Earnestly.*) Yes, you'll stick by me, Jack, won't you? I'm awf'ly happy, but I don't mind telling *you* that I'm in a blue funk!

CAPT. M.—(*Gravely.*) Are you? I should never have noticed it. You don't *look* like it.

CAPT. G. — Don't I? That's all right. (*Spinning round.*) On my soul and honor, Jack, She's the sweetest little angel that ever

came down from the sky. There isn't a woman on earth fit to speak to Her!

CAPT. M.—(*Aside*)—And this is old Gaddy! (*Aloud.*) Go on if it relieves you.

CAPT. G.—You can laugh! That's all you wild asses of bachelors are fit for.

CAPT. M.—(*Drawling.*) You never *would* wait for the troop to come up. You aren't quite married yet, y' know.

CAPT. G.—Ugh! That reminds me. I don't believe I shall be able to get into my boots. Let's go home and try 'em on! (*Hurries forward.*)

CAPT. M.—'Wouldn't be in *your* shoes for anything that Asia has to offer.

CAPT. G.—(*Spinning round.*) That just shows your hideous blackness of soul—your dense stupidity—your brutal narrow-mindedness. There's only one fault about you. You're the best of good fellows, and I don't know what I should have done without you, but—you aren't married. (*Wags his head gravely.*) Take a wife, Jack.

CAPT. M.—(*With a face like a wall.*) Ya-as. Whose for choice?

CAPT. G.—If you're going to be a blackguard, I'm going on . . . What's the time?

CAPT. M. (*Hums*)—

"An' since it was very clear we drank only ginger-beer,
Faith, there must ha' been some stings in the ginger."

Come back, you maniac. I'm going to

take you home, and you're going to lie down.

CAPT. G.—What on earth do I want to lie down for?

CAPT M.—Give me a light from your cheroot and see.

CAPT. G.—(*Watching cheroot-butt quiver like a tuning-fork.*) Sweet state I'm in!

CAPT. M.—You are. I'll get you a peg and you'll go to sleep.

They return and M. compounds a four-finger peg.

CAPT. G.—O, *bus! bus!* It'll make me as drunk as an owl.

CAPT. M.—'Curious thing, 'twont have the slightest effect on you. Drink it off, chuck yourself down there, and go to bye-bye.

CAPT. G.—It's absurd. I shan't sleep. I *know* I shan't!

Falls into heavy doze at end of seven minutes. CAPT. M. *watches him tenderly.*

CAPT. M.—Poor old Gaddy! I've seen a few turned off before, but never one who went to the gallows in this condition. 'Can't tell how it affects 'em, though. It's the thoroughbreds that sweat when they're backed into double-harness. . . . And that's the man who went through the guns at Amdheran like a devil possessed of devils. (*Leans over* G.) But this is worse than the guns, old pal—worse than the guns, isn't it? (G. *turns in his sleep, and* M. *touches him clumsily on the forehead.*) Poor, dear, old Gaddy! Going

like the rest of 'em—going like the rest of 'em . . . Friend that sticketh closer than a brother . . . eight years! Dashed bit of a slip of a girl . . . eight weeks! And—where's your friend. (*Smokes disconsolately till church clock strikes three.*)

CAPT. M.—Up with you! Get into your kit.

CAPT. G.—Already? Isn't it too soon? Hadn't I better have a shave?

CAPT. M.—*No!* You're all right. (*Aside.*) He'd chip his chin to pieces.

CAPT. G.—What's the hurry?

CAPT. M.—You've got to be there first.

CAPT. G.—To be stared at?

CAPT. M.—Exactly. You're part of the show. Where's the burnisher? Your spurs are in a shameful state.

CAPT. G.—(*Gruffly.*) Jack, I be damned if you shall do that for me.

CAPT. M.—(*More gruffly.*) Dry up and get dressed! If I choose to clean your spurs, you're under *my* orders.

CAPT. G. *dresses.* M. *follows suit.*

CAPT. M.— (*Critically, walking round.*) M'yes, you'll do. Only don't look so like a criminal. Ring, gloves, fees—that's all right for me. Let your mustache alone. Now, if the tats are ready, we'll go.

CAPT. G.—(*Nervously.*) It's much too soon. Let's light up! Let's have a peg! Let's—

CAPT. M.—Let's make bally asses of ourselves.

BELLS.—(*Without.*)

Good—peo—ple—all
To prayers—we call.

CAPT. M.—There go the bells! Come on—unless you'd rather not. (*They ride off.*)

BELLS.—

We honor the King
And Bride's joy do bring—
Good tidings we tell
And ring the Dead's knell.

CAPT. G.—(*Dismounting at the door of the Church.*) I say, aren't we much too soon? There are no end of people inside. I say, aren't we much too late? Stick by me, Jack! What the devil do I do?

CAPT. M.—Strike an attitude at the head of the aisle and wait for Her. (G. *groans as* M. *wheels him into position before three hundred eyes.*)

CAPT. M.—(*Imploringly.*) Gaddy, if you love me, for pity's sake, for the Honor of the Regiment, stand up! Chuck yourself into your uniform! Look like a man! I've got to speak to the Padre a minute. (G. *breaks into a gentle perspiration.*) If you wipe your face I'll *never* be your best man again. Stand *up!* (G. *trembles visibly.*)

CAPT. M.—(*Returning.*) She's coming

now. Look out when the music starts. There's the organ beginning to clack.

Bride steps out of 'rickshaw at Church door. G. catches a glimpse of her and takes heart.

ORGAN.—(*Diapason and bourdon.*)

> The Voice that breathed o'er Eden,
> That earliest marriage day,
> The primal marriage blessing,
> It hath not passed away.

CAPT. M.—(*Watching* G.) By Jove! He *is* looking well. Didn't think he had it in him.

CAPT. G.—How long does this hymn go on for?

CAPT. M.— It will be over directly. (*Anxiously.*) Beginning to bleach and gulp? Hold on, Gaddy, and think o' the Regiment.

CAPT. G.—(*Measuredly.*) I say, there's a big brown lizard crawling up that wall.

CAPT. M.—My Sainted Mother! The last stage of collapse!

Bride comes up to left of altar, lifts her eyes once to G., *who is suddenly smitten mad.*

CAPT. G.—(*To himself again and again.*) Little Featherweight's a woman—a woman! And I thought she was a little girl.

CAPT. M.—(*In a whisper.*) From the halt —inward *wheel.*

CAPT. G. *obeys mechanically and the ceremony proceeds.*

PADRE.— . . . only unto her as long as ye both shall live?

CAPT. G.—(*His throat useless.*) Ha—hmmm!

CAPT. M.—Say you will or you won't. There's no second deal here.

Bride gives response with perfect coolness, and is given away by the father.

CAPT. G.—(*Thinking to show his learning.*) Jack, give me away now, *quick!*

CAPT. M.—You've given yourself away quite enough. Her *right* hand, man! Repeat! Repeat! "Theodore Philip." Have you forgotten your own name?

CAPT. G. *stumbles through Affirmation, which Bride repeats without a tremor.*

CAPT. M.—Now the ring! Follow the Padre! Don't pull off my glove! Here it is! Great Cupid, he's found his voice!

G. *repeats Troth in a voice to be heard to the end of the Church and turns on his heel.*

CAPT. M.— (*Desperately.*) Rein back! Back to your troop! 'Tisn't half legal yet.

PADRE.— . . . joined together let no man put asunder.

CAPT. G. *paralyzed with fear, jibs after Blessing.*

CAPT. M.—(*Quickly.*) On your own front —one length. Take her with you. I don't come. You've nothing to say. (CAPT. G. *jingles up to altar.*)

CAPT. M.—(*In a piercing rattle meant to be*

a whisper.) Kneel, you stiff-necked ruffian! Kneel!

PADRE.— . . . whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.

CAPT. M.—Dismiss! Break off! Left wheel!

All troop to vestry. They sign.

CAPT. M.—Kiss Her, Gaddy.

CAPT. G.—(*Rubbing the ink into his glove.*) Eh! Wha—at?

CAPT. M.— (*Taking one pace to Bride.*) If you don't, I shall.

CAPT. G.—(*Interposing an arm.*) Not this journey!

General kissing, in which CAPT. G. *is pursued by unknown female.*

CAPT. G.— (*Faintly to* M.) This is Hades! Can I wipe my face now?

CAPT. M.— My responsibility has ended. Better ask *Missis* Gadsby.

CAPT. G. *winces as if shot and procession is Mendelssohned out of Church to paternal roof, where usual tortures take place over the wedding-cake.*

CAPT. M.— (*At table.*) Up with you, Gaddy. They expect a speech.

CAPT. G.— (*After three minutes' agony.*) Ha—hmmm. (*Thunders of applause.*)

CAPT. M.—Doocid good, for a first attempt. Now go and change your kit while Mama is weeping over— "the Missus." (CAPT. G.

disappears. CAPT. M. *starts up tearing his hair.*) It's not *half* legal. Where are the shoes? Get an *ayah.*

AYAH.—Missie Captain Sahib done gone *band karo* all the *jutis.*

CAPT. M.—(*Brandishing scabbarded sword.*) Woman, produce those shoes! Some one lend me a bread-knife. We mustn't crack Gaddy's head more than it is. (*Slices heel off white satin slipper and puts slipper up his sleeve.*) Where is the Bride? (*To the company at large.* Be tender with that rice. It's a heathen custom. Give me the big bag.

. . . . .

Bride slips out quietly into 'rickshaw and departs towards the sunset.

CAPT. M.—(*In the open.*) Stole away, by Jove! So much the worse for Gaddy! Here he is. Now, Gaddy, this'll be livelier than Amdheran! Where's your horse?

CAPT. G.—(*Furiously, seeing that the women are out of earshot.*) Where the —— is my *Wife?*

CAPT. M.—Half-way to Mahasu by this time. You'll have to ride like Young Lochinvar.

Horse comes round on his hind legs; refuses to let G. *handle him.*

CAPT. G.—Oh, you will, will you? Get round, you brute—you hog—you beast! Get *round!*

Wrenches horse's head over, nearly breaking

lower jaw; swings himself into saddle, and sends home both spurs in the midst of a spattering gale of Best Patna.

CAPT. M. — For your life and your love — ride, Gaddy! — And God bless you!

Throws half a pound of rice at G., *who disappears, bowed forward on the saddle, in a cloud of sunlit dust.*

CAPT. M. — I've lost old Gaddy. (*Lights cigarette and strolls off, singing absently*) :—

"You may carve it on his tombstone, you may cut it on his card,
That a young man married is a young man marred!"

MISS DEERCOURT. — (*From her horse.*) Really, Captain Mafflin! You are more plain-spoken than polite!

CAPT. M. — (*Aside.*) They say marriage is like cholera. Wonder who'll be the next victim.

White satin slipper slides from his sleeve and falls at his feet. Left wondering.

CURTAIN.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

"AND ye shall be as—Gods!"

SCENE. — *Thymy grass-plot at back of the Mahasu dâk-bungalow, overlooking little wooded valley. On the left, glimpse of the Dead Forest of Fagoo; on the right, Simla Hills. In background, line of the Snows.* CAPT. GADSBY, *now one week a husband, is smoking the pipe of peace on a rug in the sunshine. Banjo and tobacco-pouch on rug. Overhead, the Fagoo eagles.* MRS. G. *comes out of bungalow.*

MRS. G. — My husband!

CAPT. G. — (*Lazily, with intense enjoyment.*) Eh, wha-at? Say that again.

MRS. G. — I've written to Mama and told her that we shall be back on the 17th.

CAPT. G.—Did you give her my love?

MRS. G.—No, I kept all that for myself. (*Sitting down by his side.*) I thought you wouldn't mind.

CAPT. G.—(*With mock sternness.*) I object awf'ly. How did you know that it was yours to keep?

MRS. G.—I guessed, Phil.

CAPT. G.—(*Rapturously.*) *Lit-tle* Feather-weight!

MRS. G.—I *won't* be called those sporting pet names, bad boy.

CAPT. G.—You'll be called anything I choose. Has it ever occurred to you, Madam, that you are my Wife?

MRS. G.—It has. I haven't ceased wondering at it yet.

CAPT. G.—Nor I. It seems so strange; and yet, somehow, it doesn't. (*Confidently.*) You see, it could have been no one else.

MRS. G.—(*Softly.*) No. No one else—for me or for you. It must have been *all* arranged from the beginning. Phil, tell me again what made you care for me.

CAPT. G.—How could I help it? You were *you*, you know.

MRS. G.—Did you ever want to help it? Speak the truth!

CAPT. G.—(*A twinkle in his eye.*) I did, darling, just at the first. But only at the very first. (*Chuckles.*) I called you—stoop low and I'll whisper—"a little beast." Ho! ho! ho!

MRS. G.—(*Taking him by the mustache and making him sit up.*) "A—little—beast!" Stop laughing over your crime! And yet you had the—the—awful cheek to propose to me!

CAPT. G.—I'd changed my mind then. And you weren't a little beast any more.

MRS. G.—Thank you, Sir! And when was I ever?

CAPT. G.—*Never!* But that first day, when you gave me tea in that peach-colored muslin gown thing, you looked—you did indeed, dear—such an absurd little mite. And I didn't know what to say to you.

MRS. G.—(*Twisting mustache.*) So you said "Little beast." Upon my word, Sir! *I* called *you* a "Crrrreature," but I wish now I had called you something worse.

CAPT. G.—(*Very meekly.*) I apologize, but you're hurting me awf'ly. (*Interlude.*) You're welcome to torture me again on those terms.

MRS. G.—Oh, *why* did you let me do it?

CAPT. G.—(*Looking across valley.*) No reason in particular, but—if it amused you or did you any good—you might—wipe those dear little boots of yours on me.

MRS. G. — (*Stretching out her hands.*) Don't! Oh, don't! Philip, my King, *please* don't talk like that. It's how *I* feel. You're so much too good for me. So much too good!

CAPT. G.—Me! I'm not fit to put my arm round you. (*Puts it round.*)

MRS. G.—Yes, you are. But I—what have I ever done?

CAPT. G.—Given me a wee bit of your heart, haven't you, my Queen?

MRS. G.—*That's* nothing. Any one would do *that*. They cou—couldn't help it.

CAPT. G.—Pussy, you'll make me horribly conceited. Just when I was beginning to feel so humble, too.

MRS. G.—Humble! I don't believe it's in your character.

CAPT. G.—What do you know of my character, Impertinence?

MRS. G.—Ah, but I shall, sha'n't I, Phil? I shall have time in all the years and years to come, to know everything about you; and there will be no secrets between us.

CAPT. G.—Little witch! I believe you know me thoroughly already.

MRS. G.—I think I can guess. You're selfish?

CAPT. G.—Yes.

MRS. G.—Foolish?

CAPT. G.—*Very.*

MRS. G.—And a dear?

CAPT. G.—That is as my lady pleases.

MRS. G.—Then your lady *is* pleased. (*A pause.*) D'you know that we're two solemn, serious, grown-up people—

CAPT. G.—(*Tilting her straw hat over her eyes.*) You grown up! Pooh! You're a baby.

MRS. G.—And we're talking nonsense.

CAPT. G.—Then let's go on talking nonsense. I rather like it. Pussy, I'll tell you a secret. Promise not to repeat?

MRS. G.—'Ye—es. Only to you.

CAPT. G.—I love you.

MRS. G.—Re-ally! For how long?

CAPT. G.—For ever and ever.

MRS. G.—That's a long time.

CAPT. G.—Think so? It's the shortest I can do with.

MRS. G.—You're getting quite clever.

CAPT. G.—I'm talking to *you*.

MRS. G.—Prettily turned. Hold up your stupid old head and I'll pay you for it!

CAPT. G.—(*Affecting supreme contempt.*) Take it yourself if you want it.

MRS. G.—I've a great mind to . . . and I will! (*Takes it, and is repaid with interest.*)

CAPT. G.—Little Featherweight, it's my opinion that we *are* a couple of idiots.)

MRS. G.—We're the only two sensible people in the world! Ask the eagle. He's coming by.

CAPT. G.—Ah! I dare say he's seen a good many "sensible people" at Mahasu They say that those birds live for ever so long.

MRS. G.—How long?

CAPT. G.—A hundred and twenty years.

MRS. G.—A hundred and twenty years! O-oh! And in a hundred and twenty years where will these two sensible people be?

CAPT. G.—What *does* it matter so long as we are together now?

MRS. G.—(*Looking round the horizon.*) Yes. Only you and I—I and you—in the whole wide, wide world until the end. (*Sees*

the line of the Snows.) How big and quiet the hills look! D'you think they care for us?

CAPT. G.—'Can't say I've consulted 'em particularly. *I* care, and that's enough for me.

MRS. G.—(*Drawing nearer to him.*) Yes, now . . . but afterwards. What's that little black blur on the Snows?

CAPT. G.— A snowstorm, forty miles away. You'll see it move, as the wind carries it across the face of that spur, and then it will be all gone.

MRS. G.—And then it will be all gone. (*Shivers.*)

CAPT. G.—(*Anxiously.*) 'Not chilled, pet, are you? 'Better let me get your cloak.

MRS. G.—No. Don't leave me, Phil. Stay here. I believe I am afraid. Oh, why are the hills so *horrid!* Phil, promise me, promise me that you'll always, *always* love me.

CAPT. G.—What's the trouble, darling? I can't promise any more than I have; but I'll promise that again and again if you like.

MRS. G.—(*Her head on his shoulder.*) *Say* it, then—say it! N-no—don't! The —the—eagles would laugh. (*Recovering.*) My husband, you've married a little goose.

CAPT. G.—(*Very tenderly.*) Have I? I am content whatever she is, so long as she is mine.

MRS. G.—(*Quickly.*) Because she is yours or because she is me mineself?

CAPT. G.—Because she is both. (*Piteously.*) I'm not clever, dear, and I don't think I can make myself understood properly.

MRS. G.—*I* understand. Pip, will you tell me something?

CAPT. G.—Anything you like. (*Aside.*) I wonder what's coming now.

MRS. G.—(*Haltingly, her eyes lowered.*) You told me once in the old days—centuries and centuries ago—that you had been engaged before. I didn't say anything—*then.*

CAPT. G.—(*Innocently.*) Why not?

MRS. G.—(*Raising her eyes to his.*) Because—because I was afraid of losing you, my heart. But now—tell about it—*please.*

CAPT. G.—There's nothing to tell. I was awf'ly old then—nearly two and twenty—and she was *quite* that.

MRS. G.—That means she was older than you. I shouldn't like her to have been younger. Well?

CAPT. G.—Well, I fancied myself in love and raved about a bit, and—oh, yes, by Jove! I made up poetry. Ha! Ha!

MRS. G.—You never wrote any for *me!* What happened?

CAPT. G.—I came out here, and the whole thing went *phut.* She wrote to say that there had been a mistake, and then she married.

MRS. G.—Did she care for you much?

CAPT. G.—No. At least she didn't show it as far as I remember.

MRS. G.—As far as you remember! Do you remember her name? (*Hears it and bows her head.*) Thank you, my husband.

CAPT. G.—Who but you had the right? Now, Little Featherweight, have you ever been mixed up in any dark and dismal tragedy?

MRS. G.—If you call me Mrs. Gadsby, p'raps I'll tell.

CAPT. G.—(*Throwing Parade rasp into his voice.*) Mrs. Gadsby, confess!

MRS. G.—Good Heavens, Phil! I never knew that you could speak in that terrible voice.

CAPT. G.—You don't know half my accomplishments yet. Wait till we are settled in the Plains, and I'll show you how I bark at my troop. You were going to say, darling?

MRS. G.—I—I don't like to, after that voice. (*Tremulously.*) Phil, never you *dare* to speak to me in that tone, whatever I may do!

CAPT. G.—My poor little love! Why, you're shaking all over. I *am* so sorry. Of course I never meant to upset you. Don't tell me anything. I'm a brute.

MRS. G.—No, you aren't, and I *will* tell. . . . There was a man.

CAPT. G.—(*Lightly.*) Was there? Lucky man!

MRS. G.—(*In a whisper.*) And I thought I cared for him.

CAPT. G.—Still luckier man! Well?

MRS. G.—And I thought I cared for him—and I didn't—and then you came—and I cared for you very, *very* much indeed. That's all. (*Face hidden.*) You aren't angry, are you?

CAPT. G.—Angry? Not in the least. (*Aside.*) Good Lord, what have I done to deserve this angel?

MRS. G.—(*Aside.*) And he never asked for the name! How funny men are! But perhaps it's as well.

CAPT. G.—That man will go to heaven because you once thought you cared for him. 'Wonder if you'll ever drag me up there?

MRS. G.—(*Firmly.*) 'Sha'n't go if you don't.

CAPT. G.—Thanks. I say, Pussy, I don't know much about your religious beliefs. You were brought up to believe in a heaven and all that, weren't you?

MRS. G.—Yes. But it was a pincushion heaven, with hymn-books in all the pews.

CAPT. G.—(*Wagging his head with intense conviction.*) Never mind. There is a *pukka* heaven.

MRS. G.—Where do you bring that message from, my prophet?

CAPT. G.—Here! Because we care for each other. So it's all right.

MRS. G.—(*As a troop of langurs crash through the branches.*) So it's all right. But Darwin says that we came from *those!*

CAPT. G.—(*Placidly.*) Ah ! Darwin was never in love with an angel. That settles it. Sstt, you brutes ! Monkeys, indeed ! You shouldn't read those books.

MRS. G.—(*Folding her hands.*) If it pleases my Lord the King to issue proclamation.

CAPT. G.—Don't, dear one. There are no orders between us. Only I'd *rather* you didn't. They lead to nothing, and bother people's heads.

MRS. G.—Like your first engagement.

CAPT. G.—(*With an immense calm.*) That was a necessary evil and led to you. Are *you* nothing ?

MRS. G.—Not so very much, am I ?

CAPT. G.—All this world and the next to me.

MRS. G.—(*Very softly.*) My boy of boys ! Shall I tell *you* something ?

CAPT. G.—Yes, if it's not dreadful—about other men.

MRS. G.—It's about my own bad little self.

CAPT. G.—Then it must be good. Go on, dear.

MRS. G.—(*Slowly.*) I don't know why I'm telling you, Pip ; but if ever you marry again—(*Interlude.*) Take your hand from my mouth or I'll *bite !*—In the future, then remember . . . I don't know quite how to put it !

CAPT. G.—(*Snorting indignantly.*) Don't try. "Marry again," indeed !

Mrs. G.—I must. Listen, my husband. Never, never, *never* tell your wife anything that you do not wish her to remember and think over all her life. Because a woman—yes, I am a woman, Sir,—*can't* forget.

Capt. G.—By Jove, how do *you* know that?

Mrs. G.—(*Confusedly.*) I don't. I'm only guessing. I am—I was—a silly little girl; but I feel that I know so much, oh, so very much more than you, dearest. To begin with, I'm your wife.

Capt. G.—So I have been led to believe.

Mrs. G.—And I shall want to know every one of your secrets—to share everything you know with you. (*Stares round desperately for lucidity and coherence.*)

Capt. G.—So you shall, dear, so you shall—but don't look like that.

Mrs. G.—For your own sake don't stop me, Phil. I shall never talk to you in this way again. You must *not* tell me! At least, not now. Later on, when I'm an old matron it won't matter, but if you love me, be very good to me now; for this part of my life I shall *never* forget! Have I made you understand?

Capt. G.—I think so, child. Have I said anything yet that you disapprove of?

Mrs. G.—Will you be *very* angry? That—that voice, and what you said about the engagement—

CAPT. G.—But you *asked* to be told that, darling.

MRS. G.—And *that's* why you shouldn't have told me! You must be the judge, and, oh, Pip, dearly as I love you, I shan't be able to help you! I shall hinder you, and you must judge in spite of me!

CAPT. G.—(*Meditatively.*) We have a great many things to find out together, God help us both—say so, Pussy—but we shall understand each other better every day; and I think I'm beginning to see now. How in the world did you come to know just the importance of giving me just that lead?

MRS. G.—I've told you that I *don't* know. Only somehow it seemed that, in all this new life, I was being guided for your sake as well as my own.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Then Mafflin was right! They know, and we—we're blind—all of us. (*Lightly.*) 'Getting a little beyond our depth, dear, aren't we? I'll remember, and, if I fail, let me be punished as I deserve.

MRS. G.—There shall be no punishment. We'll start into life together from here—you and I—and no one else.

CAPT. G.—And no one else. (*A pause.*) Your eyelashes are all wet, Sweet? Was there ever such a quaint little Absurdity?

MRS. G.—Was there ever such nonsense talked before?

CAPT. G.—(*Knocking the ashes out of his*

pipe.) 'Tisn't what we say, it's what we don't say, that helps. And it's all the profoundest philosophy. But no one would understand—even if it were put into a book.

MRS. G.—The idea! No—only we ourselves, or people like ourselves—if there are any people like us.

CAPT. G.—(*Magisterially.*) All people, not like ourselves, are blind idiots.

MRS. G.—(*Wiping her eyes.*) Do you think, then, that there are any people as happy as we are?

CAPT. G.—'Must be—unless we've appropriated all the happiness in the world.

MRS. G.—(*Looking towards Simla.*) Poor dears! Just fancy if we have!

CAPT. G.—Then we'll hang on to the whole show, for it's a great deal too jolly to lose—eh, wife o' mine?

MRS. G.—Oh, Pip, Pip! How much of you is a solemn, married man and how much a horrid, slangy schoolboy?

CAPT. G.—When you tell me how much of you was eighteen last birthday and how much is as old as the Sphinx and twice as mysterious, perhaps I'll attend to you. Lend me that banjo. The spirit moveth me to yowl at the sunset.

MRS. G.—Mind! It's not tuned. Ah! how that jars!

CAPT. G.—(*Turning pegs.*) It's amazingly difficult to keep a banjo to proper pitch.

MRS. G.—It's the same with all musical instruments. What shall it be?

CAPT. G.—"Vanity," and let the hills hear. (*Sings through the first and half of the second verse. Turning to* MRS. G.) Now, chorus! Sing, Pussy!

BOTH TOGETHER—(*Con brio, to the horror of the monkeys who are settling for the night.*)

"Vanity, all is Vanity," said Wisdom, scorning me—
I clasped my true love's tender hand and answered
frank and free—ee:—
"If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wi—ise?
(*Crescendo.*)—Vanity let it be!"

MRS. G.—(*Defiantly to the gray of the evening sky.*) "Vanity let it be!"

ECHO.—(*From the Fagoo spur.*) Let it be!

CURTAIN.

FATIMA.

"AND you may go into every room of the house and see everything that is there, but into the Blue Room you must *not* go."—*The Story of Blue Beard.*

SCENE.—*The* GADSBYS' *bungalow in the Plains. Time,* 11 A. M., *on a Sunday morning.* CAPTAIN GADSBY, *in his shirt-sleeves, is bending over a complete set of Hussar's equipment, from saddle to picketing-rope, which is neatly spread over the floor of his study. He is smoking an unclean briar, and his forehead is puckered with thought.*

CAPT. G.—(*To himself, fingering a head-stall.*) Jack's an ass! There's enough brass on this to load a mule . . . and, if the Americans know anything about anything, it can be cut down to a bit only. 'Don't want the watering-ing-bridle, either. Humbug! . . . Half a dozen sets of chains and pulleys for the same old horse! (*Scratching his head.*) Now, let's consider it all over from the beginning. By Jove, I've forgotten the scale of weights! Ne'er mind. 'Keep the bit only, and eliminate every boss from the crupper to the breast-

plate. No breastplate at all. Simple leather strap across the breast—like the Russians. Hi! Jack never thought of *that!*

MRS. G.—(*Entering hastily, her hand bound in a cloth.*) Oh, Pip! I've scalded my hand over that horrid, horrid Tiparee jam.

CAPT. G.—(*Absently.*) Eh! Wha-at?

MRS. G.—(*With round-eyed reproach.*) I've scalded it *aw*-fully! Aren't you sorry? And I *did* so want that jam to jam properly.

CAPT. G.—Poor little woman! Let me kiss the place and make it well. (*Unrolling bandage.*) Small sinner! Where's that scald? I can't see it.

MRS. G.—On the top of the little finger. There!—It's a most 'normous big burn!

CAPT. G.—(*Kissing little finger.*) Baby! Let Hyder look after the jam. You know I don't care for sweets.

MRS. G.—In-deed? . . . Pip!

CAPT. G.—Not of that kind, anyhow. And now run along, Minnie, and leave me to my own base devices. I'm busy.

MRS. G.—(*Calmly settling herself in long chair.*) So I see. What a mess you're making! Why have you brought all that smelly leather stuff into the house?

CAPT. G.—To play with. Do you mind, dear?

MRS. G.—Let *me* play, too. I'd like it.

CAPT. G.—I'm afraid you wouldn't, Pussy. . . . Don't you think that jam will burn, or

whatever it is that jam does when it's not looked after by a clever little housekeeper?

MRS. G.—I thought you said Hyder could attend to it. I left him in the veranda, stirring —when I hurt myself so.

CAPT. G.—(*His eye returning to the equipment.*) Po-oor little woman! . . . Three pound four and seven is three eleven, and that can be cut down to two eight, with just a *lee*-tle care, without weakening anything. Farriery is all rot in incompetent hands. What's the use of a shoe-case when a man's scouting? He can't stick it on with a lick—like a stamp—the shoe! Skittles!

MRS. G.—What's skittles? Pah! What *is* this leather cleaned with?

CAPT. G.—Cream and champagne and . . . Look here, dear, do you really want to talk to me about anything important?

MRS. G.—No. I've done my accounts, and I thought I'd like to see what you're doing.

CAPT. G.—Well, love, now you've seen and . . . Would you mind? . . . That is to say. . . Minnie, I really *am* busy.

MRS. G.—You want me to go?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear, for a little while. This tobacco will hang in your dress, and saddlery doesn't interest you.

MRS. G.—Everything you do interests me, Pip.

CAPT. G.—Yes, I know, I know, dear. I'll tell you all about it some day when

I've put a head on this thing. In the meantime . . .

MRS. G.—I'm to be turned out of the room like a troublesome child?

CAPT. G.—No–o. I don't mean that exactly. But, you see, I shall be tramping up and down, shifting these things to and fro, and I shall be in your way. Don't you think so?

MRS. G.—Can't I lift them about? Let me try. (*Reaches forward to trooper's saddle.*)

CAPT. G. — Good gracious, child, don't touch it. You'll hurt yourself. (*Picking up saddle.*) Little girls aren't expected to handle *numdahs*. Now, where would you like it put? (*Holds saddle above his head.*)

MRS. G.—(*A break in her voice.*) Nowhere. Pip, how good you are—and how strong! Oh, what's that ugly red streak inside your arm?

Capt. G. — (*Lowering saddle quickly.*) Nothing. It's a mark of sorts. (*Aside.*) And Jack's coming to tiffin with *his* notions all cut and dried!

MRS. G.—I know it's a mark, but I've never seen it before. It runs all up the arm. What is it?

CAPT. G.—A cut—if you want to know.

MRS. G.—Want to know! Of course I do! I can't have my husband cut to pieces in this way. How did it come? Was it an accident! Tell me, Pip.

CAPT. G.—(*Grimly.*) No. 'Twasn't an

accident. I got it—from a man—in Afghanistan.

MRS. G.—In action? Oh, Pip, and you *never* told me!

CAPT. G.—I'd forgotten all about it.

MRS. G.—Hold up your arm! What a horrid, ugly scar! Are you sure it doesn't hurt now? How did the man give it you?

CAPT. G. — (*Desperately looking at his watch.*) With a knife. I came down—Old Van Loo did, that's to say—and fell on my leg, so I couldn't run. And then this man came up and began chopping at me as I sprawled.

MRS. G.— Oh, don't, don't! That's enough! . . . Well, what happened?

CAPT. G.—I couldn't get to my holster, and Mafflian came round the corner and stopped the performance.

MRS. G.—He's such a lazy man, I don't believe he did.

CAPT. G.—Don't you? I don't think the man had much doubt about it. Jack cut his head off.

MRS. G.—Cut—his—head—off! "With one below" as they say in the books?

CAPT. G.—I'm not sure. I was too interested in myself to know much about it. Anyhow, the head was off, and Jack was punching old Van Loo in the ribs to make him get up. Now you know all about it, dear and now . . .

MRS. G.—You want me to go, of course. You never told me about this, though I've been married to you for *ever* so long; and you never *would* have told me if I hadn't found out; and you never *do* tell me anything about yourself, or what you do, or what you take an interest in.

CAPT. G.—Darling, I'm always with you, aren't I?

MRS. G.—Always in my pocket, you were going to say. I know you are; but you are always *thinking* away from me.

CAPT. G.—(*Trying to hide a smile.*) Am I? I wasn't aware of it. I'm awf'ly sorry.

MRS. G.—(*Piteously.*) Oh, don't make fun of me! Pip, you know what I mean. When you are reading one of those things about Cavalry, by that idiotic Prince—why doesn't he *be* a Prince instead of a stable-boy?

CAPT. G.—Prince Kraft a stable-boy! Oh, my Aunt! Never mind, dear! You were going to say?

MRS. G.—It doesn't matter. You don't care for what I say. Only—only you get up and walk about the room, staring in front of you, and then Mafflin comes in to dinner, and after I'm in the drawing-room I can hear you and him talking, and talking, and talking, about things I can't understand, and—oh, I get *so* tired and feel *so* lonely!—I don't want to complain and be a trouble, Pip; but I do—indeed I do!

CAPT. G.—My poor darling! I never thought of that. Why don't you ask some nice people in to dinner?

MRS. G.—Nice people! Where am I to find them? Horrid frumps! And if I *did*, I shouldn't be amused. You know I only want *you*.

CAPT. G.—And you have me surely, Sweetheart?

MRS. G.—I have not! Pip, why don't you take me into your life?"

CAPT. G.—More than I do? That would be difficult, dear.

MRS. G.—Yes, I suppose it would—to you. I'm no help to you—no companion to you; and you like to have it so.

CAPT. G.—Aren't you a little unreasonable, Pussy?

MRS. G.—(*Stamping her foot.*) I'm the most reasonable woman in the world—when I'm treated properly.

CAPT. G.—And since when have I been treating you improperly?

MRS. G.—Always—and since the beginning. You *know* you have.

CAPT. G.—I don't. But I'm willing to be convinced.

MRS. G.—(*Pointing to saddlery.*) There!

CAPT. G.—How do you mean?

MRS. G.—What does all *that* mean? Why am I not to be told? Is it so precious?

CAPT. G.—I forget its exact Government

value just at present. It means that it is a great deal too heavy.

MRS. G.—Then why do you touch it?

CAPT. G.—To make it lighter. See here, little love, I've one notion and Jack has another, but we are both agreed that all this equipment is about thirty pounds too heavy. The thing is how to cut it down without weakening any part of it, and, at the same time, allowing the trooper to carry everything he wants for his own comfort—socks and shirts and things of that kind.

MRS. G.—Why doesn't he pack them in a little trunk?

CAPT. G.—(*Kissing her.*) Oh, you darling! Pack them in a little trunk, indeed! Hussars don't carry trunks, and it's a most important thing to make the horse do all the carrying.

MRS. G.—But why need *you* bother about it? You're not a trooper.

CAPT. G.—No; but I command a few score of him; and equipment is nearly everything in these days.

MRS. G.—More than *me?*

CAPT. G.—Stupid! Of course not; but it's a matter that I'm tremendously interested in, because if I or Jack, or I and Jack, hack out some sort of lighter saddlery and all that, it's possible that we may get it adopted.

MRS. G.—How?

CAPT. G.—Sanctioned at Home, where they will make a sealed pattern—a pattern that all

the saddlers must copy—and so it will be used by all the regiments.

MRS. G.—And that interests you?

CAPT. G.—It's part of my profession, y' know, and my profession is a good deal to me. Everything in a soldier's equipment is important, and if we can improve that equipment, so much the better for the soldiers and for us.

MRS. G.—Who's "us"?

CAPT. G.—Jack and I, though Jack's notions are too radical. What's that big sigh for, Minnie?

MRS. G.—Oh, nothing . . . and you've kept all this a secret from me! Why?

CAPT. G.—Not a secret, exactly, dear. I didn't say anything about it to you because I didn't think it would amuse you.

MRS. G.—And am I only made to be amused?

CAPT. G.—No, of course. I merely mean that it couldn't interest you.

MRS. G.—It's *your* work and—and if you'd let me, I'd count all these things up. If they are too heavy, you know by how much they are too heavy, and you must have a list of things made out to your scale of lightness, and—

CAPT. G.—I have got both scales somewhere in my head; but it's hard to tell how light you can make a headstall, for instance, until you've actually had a model made.

MRS. G.—But if you read out the list, I could copy it down, and pin it up there just above your table. Wouldn't that do?

CAPT. G.—It would be awf'ly nice, dear, but it would be giving you trouble for nothing. I can't work that way. I go by rule of thumb. I know the present scale of weights. and the other one—the one that I'm trying to work to—will shift and vary so much that I couldn't be certain, even if I wrote it down.

MRS. G.—I'm *so* sorry. I thought I might help. Is there anything else that I could be of use in?

CAPT. G.—(*Looking round the room.*) I can't think of anything. You're *always* helping me, you know.

MRS. G.—Am I? How?

CAPT. G.—You are you of course, and as long as you're near me—I can't explain exactly, but it's in the air.

MRS. G.—And that's why you wanted to send me away?

CAPT. G.—That's only when I'm trying to do work—grubby work like this.

MRS. G.—Mafflin's better, then, isn't he?

CAPT. G.—(*Rashly.*) Of course he is. Jack and I have been thinking down the same groove for two or three years about this equipment. It's our hobby, and it may really be useful some day.

MRS. G.—(*After a pause.*) And that's all that you have away from me?

CAPT. G.—It isn't very far away from you now. Take care that the oil on that bit doesn't come off on your dress.

MRS. G.—I wish—I wish so much that I could really help you. I believe I could . . . if I left the room. But that's not what I mean.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Give me patience! I wish she would go. (*Aloud.*) I assure you you can't do anything for me, Minnie, and I must really settle down to this. Where's my pouch?

MRS. G.—(*Crossing to writing-table.*) Here you are, Bear. What a mess you keep your table in!

CAPT. G.—Don't touch it. There's a method in my madness, though you mightn't think it.

MRS. G.—(*At table.*) I want to look. . . . Do you keep accounts, Pip?

CAPT. G.—(*Bending over saddlery.*) Of a sort. Are you rummaging among the Troop papers? Be careful.

MRS. G.—Why? I sha'n't disturb anything. Good gracious! I had no idea that you had anything to do with so many sick horses.

CAPT. G.—'Wish I hadn't, but they insist on falling sick. Minnie, if I were you I really should not investigate those papers. You may come across something that you won't like.

MRS. G.—Why will you always treat me like a child? I know I'm not displacing the horrid things.

CAPT. G.—(*Resignedly.*) Very well, then, Don't blame me if anything happens. Play with the table and let me go on with the saddlery. (*Slipping hand into trousers-pocket.*) Oh, the deuce!

MRS. G.—(*Her back to* G.) What's that for?

CAPT. G.—Nothing. (*Aside.*) There's not much of importance in it, but I wish I'd torn it up.

MRS. G.—(*Turning over contents of table.*) I know you'll hate me for this; but I do want to see what your work is like. (*A pause.*) Pip, what are "farcy-buds"?

CAPT. G.—Hah! Would you really like to know? They aren't pretty things.

MRS. G.—This Journal of Veterinary Science says they are of "absorbing interest." Tell me.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) It may turn her attention.

Gives a long and designedly loathsome account of glanders and farcy.

MRS. G.—Oh, that's enough. Don't go on!

CAPT. G.—But you wanted to know. . . . Then these things suppurate and matterate and spread—

MRS. G.—Pip, you're making me sick! You're a horrid, disgusting schoolboy.

CAPT. G.—(*On his knees among the bridles.*)

You asked to be told. It's not my fault if you worry me into talking about horrors.

MRS. G.—Why didn't you say—No?

CAPT. G.—Good Heavens, child? Have you come in here simply to bully me?

MRS. G.—I bully *you?* How could I! You're so strong. (*Hysterically.*) Strong enough to pick me up and put me outside the door, and leave me there to cry. Aren't you?

CAPT. G.—It seems to me that you're an irrational little baby. Are you quite well?

MRS. G.—Do I look ill? (*Returning to table.*) Who is your lady friend with the big gray envelope and the fat monogram outside?

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Then it wasn't in the drawers, confound it. (*Aloud.*) "God made her, therefore let her pass for a woman." You remember what farcy-buds are like?

MRS. G.—(*Showing envelope.*) This has nothing to do with *them.* I'm going to open it. May I?

CAPT. G.—Certainly, if you want to. I'd sooner you didn't, though. I don't ask to look at your letters to the Deercourt girl.

MRS. G.—You'd *better* not, Sir! (*Takes letter from envelope.*) Now, may I look? If you say no, I shall cry.

CAPT. G.—You've never cried in my knowledge of you, and I don't believe you could.

MRS. G.—I feel very like it to-day, Pip.

Don't be hard on me. (*Reads letter.*) It begins in the middle, without any "Dear Captain Gadsby," or anything. How funny!

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) No, it's not Dear Captain Gadsby, or anything, now. How funny!

MRS. G.—What a strange letter! (*Reads.*) "And so the moth has come too near the candle at last, and has been singed into—shall I say Respectability? I congratulate him, and hope he will be as happy as he deserves to be." What does that mean? Is she congratulating you about our marriage?

CAPT. G.—Yes, I suppose so.

MRS. G.—(*Still reading letter.*) She seems to be a particular friend of yours.

CAPT. G.—Yes. She was excellent matron of sorts—a Mrs. Herriott—wife of a Colonel Herriott. I used to know some of her people at Home long ago—before I came out.

MRS. G.—Some Colonels' wives are young—as young as me. I knew one who was younger.

CAPT. G.—Then it couldn't have been Mrs. Herriott. She was old enough to have been your mother, dear.

MRS. G.—I remember now. Mrs. Scargill was talking about her at the Duffins' tennis, before you came for me, on Tuesday. Captain Mafflin said she was a "dear old woman." Do you know, I think Mafflin is a very clumsy man with his feet.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) Good old Jack! (*Aloud.*) Why, dear?

MRS. G.—He had put his cup down on the ground then, and he literally stepped into it. Some of the tea spirted over my dress—the gray one. I meant to tell you about it before.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) There are the makings of a strategist about Jack, though his methods are coarse. (*Aloud.*) You'd better get a new dress, then. (*Aside.*) Let us pray that that will turn her.

MRS. G.—Oh, it isn't stained in the least. I only thought that I'd tell you. (*Returning to letter.*) *What* an extraordinary person! (*Reads.*) "But need I remind you that you have taken upon yourself a charge of wardship"—what in the world is a charge of wardship?—"which, as you yourself know, may end in Consequences" . . .

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) It's safest to let 'em see everything as they come across it; but 'seems to me that there are exceptions to the rule. (*Aloud.*) I told you that there was nothing to be gained from rearranging my table.

MRS. G.—(*Absently.*) What *does* the woman mean? She goes on talking about Consequences—"almost inevitable Consequences" with a capital C—for half a page. (*Flushing scarlet.*) Oh, good gracious! How abominable!

CAPT. G.—(*Promptly.*) Do you think so? Doesn't it show a sort of motherly interest in us? (*Aside.*) Thank Heaven, Harry always wrapped her meaning up safely. (*Aloud.*) *Is* it absolutely necessary to go on with the letter, darling?

MRS. G.—It's impertinent—it's simply horrid. What *right* has this woman to write in this way to you? She oughtn't to.

CAPT. G.—When you write to the Deercourt girl, I notice that you generally fill three or four sheets. Can't you let an old woman babble on paper once in a way? She means well.

MRS. G.—I don't care. She shouldn't write, and if she did, you ought to have shown me her letter.

CAPT. G.—Can't you understand why I kept it to myself, or must I explain at length —as I explained the farcy-buds?

MRS. G.—(*Furiously.*) Pip, I *hate* you! This is as bad as those idiotic saddle-bags on the floor. Never mind whether it would please me or not, you ought to have given it to me to read.

CAPT. G.—It comes to the same thing. You took it yourself.

MRS. G.—Yes, but if I hadn't taken it, you wouldn't have said a word. I think this Harriet Herriott—it's like a name in a book—is an interfering old Thing.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) So long as you thor-

oughly understand that she *is* old, I don't much care what you think. (*Aloud.*) Very good, dear. Would you like to write and tell her so? She's seven thousand miles away.

MRS. G.—I don't want to have anything to do with her, but you ought to have told me. (*Turning to last page of letter.*) And she patronizes *me*, too. *I've* never seen her! (*Reads.*) "I do not know how the world stands with you. In all human probability I shall never know; but whatever I may have said before, I pray for *her* sake more than for yours that all may be well. I have learnt what misery means, and I dare not wish that any one dear to you should share my knowledge."

CAPT. G.—Good God! Can't you leave that letter alone, or, at least, can't you refrain from reading it aloud? I've been through it once. Put it back on the desk. Do you hear me?

MRS. G.—(*Irresolutely.*) I sh—sha'n't! (*Looks at* G.'s *eyes.*) Oh, Pip, *please!* I didn't mean to make you angry—'Deed, I didn't. Pip, I'm so sorry. I know I've wasted your time . . .

CAPT. G.—(*Grimly.*) You have. Now, will you be good enough to go . . . if there is nothing more in my room that you are anxious to pry into?

MRS. G.—(*Putting out her hands.*) Oh, Pip, don't look at me like that! I've never

seen you look like that before and it hu-urts me! I'm sorry. I oughtn't to have been here at all, and—and—and—(*sobbing.*) Oh, be good to me! Be good to me! There's only you—anywhere!

Breaks down in long chair, hiding face in cushions.

CAPT. G.—(*Aside.*) She doesn't know how she flicked me on the raw. (*Aloud, bending over chair.*) I didn't mean to be harsh, dear—I didn't really. You can stay here as long as you please, and do what you please. Don't cry like that. You'll make yourself sick. (*Aside.*) What on earth has come over her? (*Aloud.*) Darling, what's the matter with you?

MRS. G.—(*Her face still hidden.*) Let me go—let me go to my own room. Only—only say you aren't angry with me.

CAPT. G.—Angry with *you*, love! Of course not. I was angry with myself. I'd lost my temper over the saddlery. . . . Don't hide your face, Pussy. I want to kiss it.

Bends lower, MRS. G. *slides right arm round his neck. Several interludes and much sobbing.*

MRS. G.—(*In a whisper.*) I didn't mean about the jam when I came in to tell you—

CAPT. G.—Bother the jam and the equipment! (*Interlude.*)

MRS. G.—(*Still more faintly.*) My finger wasn't scalded at *all.* I—I wanted to speak to you about—about—something else, and—I didn't know how.

CAPT. G.—Speak away, then. (*Looking into her eyes.*) Eh! Wha—at? Minnie! Here, don't go away! You don't mean?

MRS. G.—(*Hysterically, backing to portière and hiding her face in its folds.*) The—the Almost Inevitable Consequences! (*Flits through portière as* G. *attempts to catch her, and bolts herself in her own room.*)

CAPT. G.—(*His arms full of portière.*) Oh! (*Sitting down heavily in chair.*) I'm a brute—a pig—a bully, and a blackguard. My poor, poor little darling! "Made to be amused only!" . . .

CURTAIN.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

"KNOWING Good and Evil."

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains, in June. Punkah-coolies asleep in veranda where* CAPT. GADSBY *is walking up and down.* DOCTOR'*s trap in porch.* JUNIOR CHAPLAIN *fluctuating generally and uneasily through the house. Time*, 3.40 A. M. *Heat* 94° *in veranda.*

DOCTOR.—(*Coming into veranda and touching* G. *on the shoulder.*) You had better go in and see her now.

CAPT. G.—(*The color of good cigar-ash.*) Eh, wha-at? Oh, yes, of course. What did you say?

DOCTOR.—(*Syllable by syllable.*) Go—in—to—the—room—and—see—her. She wants to speak to you. (*Aside, testily.*) I shall have *him* on my hands next.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—(*In half-lighted dining-room.*) Isn't there any—?

DOCTOR.—(*Savagely.*) Hsh, you little fool!

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—Let me do my work. Gadsby, stop a minute! (*Edges after* G.)

DOCTOR.—Wait till she sends for you at

least—*at least.* Man alive, he'll kill you if you go in there! What are you bothering him for?

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—(*Coming into veranda.*) I've given him a stiff brandy-peg. He wants it. You've forgotten him for the last ten hours and—forgotten yourself too.

G. *enters bedroom, which is lit by one night-light. Ayah on the floor pretending to be asleep.*

VOICE.—(*From the bed.*) All down the street—*such* bonfires! *Ayah,* go and put them out! (*Appealingly.*) How can I sleep with an installation of the C. I. E. in my room? No—not C. I. E. Something else. *What* was it?

CAPT. G.—(*Trying to control his voice.*) Minnie, I'm here. (*Bending over bed.*) Don't you know me, Minnie? It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

VOICE.—(*Mechanically.*) It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

CAPT. G.—She doesn't know me! . . . It's your own husband, darling.

VOICE.—Your own husband, darling.

AYAH.—(*With an inspiration.*) *Memsahib* understanding all *I* saying.

CAPT. G.—Make her understand me then—quick!

AYAH.—(*Hand on* MRS. G's. *forehead.*) *Memsahib!* Captain Sahib *aya.*

VOICE.—*Salam do.* (*Fretfully.*) I know I'm not fit to be seen.

AYAH.—(*Aside to* G.) Say "*marneen*" same as at breakfash.

CAPT. G.—Good morning, little woman. How are we to-day?

VOICE. —That's Phil. Poor old Phil. (*Viciously.*) Phil, you fool, I can't see you. Come nearer.

CAPT. G.—Minnie! Minnie! It's me—you know me?

VOICE. —(*Mockingly.*) Of course I do. Who does not know the man who was so cruel to his wife—almost the only one he ever had?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear. Yes—of course, of course. But won't you speak to him? He wants to speak to you *so* much.

VOICE.—They'd never let him in. The Doctor would give *darwaza band* even if he were in the house. He'll never come. (*Despairingly.*) Oh, Judas! Judas! Judas!

CAPT. G.—(*Putting out his arms.*) They have let him in, and he always was in the house. Oh, my love—don't you know me?

VOICE.—(*In a half chant.*) "And it came to pass at the eleventh hour that this poor soul repented." It knocked at the gates, but they were shut—tight as a plaster—a great, burning plaster. They had pasted our marriage certificate all across the door, and it was made of red-hot iron—people really ought to be more careful, you know.

CAPT. G.—What *am* I to do? (*Takes her*

in his arms.) Minnie! speak to me—to Phil.

VOICE.—What shall I say? Oh, tell me what to say before it's too late! They are all going away and I can't say anything.

CAPT. G.—Say you know me! Only say you know me!

DOCTOR.—(*Who has entered quietly.*) For pity's sake don't take it too much to heart, Gadsby. It's this way sometimes. They won't recognize. They say all sorts of queer things—don't you *see?*

CAPT. G.—All right! All right! Go away now; she'll recognize me; you're bothering her. She *must*—mustn't she, Doc?

DOCTOR.—She will before . . . Have I your leave to try—

CAPT. G.—Anything you please, so long as she'll know me. It's only a question of—hours, isn't it?

DOCTOR.—(*Professionally.*) While there's life there's hope, y' know. But don't build on it.

CAPT. G.—I don't. Pull her together if it's possible. (*Aside.*) What have I done to deserve this?

DOCTOR.—(*Bending over bed.*) Now, Mrs. Gadsby! We shall be all right to-morrow. You *must* take it, or I sha'n't let Phil see you. It isn't nasty, is it?

VOICE.—Medicines! *Always* more medicines! Can't you leave me alone?

CAPT. G.—Oh, leave her in peace, Doc!

DOCTOR.—(*Stepping back,—aside.*) May I be forgiven if I've done wrong. (*Aloud.*) In a few minutes she ought to be sensible; but I daren't tell you to look for anything. It's only—

CAPT. G.—What? Go *on*, man.

DOCTOR.—(*In a whisper.*) Forcing the last rally.

CAPT. G.—Then leave us alone.

DOCTOR.—Don't mind what she says at first, if you can. They . . . they . . . they turn against those they love most sometimes in this . . . It's hard, but . . .

CAPT. G.—Am I her husband or are you? Leave us alone for whatever time we have together.

VOICE.—(*Confidentially.*) And we were engaged *quite* suddenly, Emma. I assure you that I never thought of it for a moment; but O my little Me!—I don't know *what* I should have done if he *hadn't* proposed.

CAPT. G.—She thinks of that Deercourt girl before she thinks of me. (*Aloud.*) Minnie!

VOICE.—Not from the shops, Mummy dear. You can get the real leaves from Kaintu, and (*laughing weakly*) never mind about the blossoms . . . Dead white silk is only fit for widows, and I *won't* wear it. It's as bad as a winding-sheet. (*A long pause.*)

CAPT. G.—I never asked a favor yet. If there is anybody to listen to me, let her know me—even if I die too!

VOICE.—) *Very faintly.*) Pip, Pip dear.

CAPT. G.—I'm here, darling.

VOICE.—What has happened? They've been bothering me so with medicines and things, and they wouldn't let you come and see me. I was never ill before. Am I ill now?

CAPT. G.—You—you aren't quite well.

VOICE.—How funny! Have I been ill long?

CAPT. G.—Some days; but you'll be all right in a little time.

VOICE.—Do you think so, Pip? I don't feel well and . . . Oh! what *have* they done to my hair?

CAPT. G.—I d-d-don't know.

VOICE.—They've cut it off. What a shame!

CAPT. G.—It must have been to make your head cooler.

VOICE.—'Just like a boy's wig. Don't I look horrid?

CAPT. G.—Never looked prettier in your life, dear. (*Aside.*) How am I to ask her to say good-by?

VOICE.—I don't *feel* pretty. I feel very ill. My heart won't work. It's nearly dead inside me, and there's a funny feeling in my eyes. Everything seems the same distance —you and the almirah and the table—inside my eyes or miles away. What does it mean, Pip?

CAPT. G.—You're a little feverish, Sweetheart—very feverish. (*Breaking down.*) My love! my love! How can I let you go?

VOICE.—I thought so. Why didn't you tell me that at first?

CAPT. G.—What?

VOICE.—That I am going to . . . die.

CAPT. G.—But you aren't! You sha'n't.

AYAH.—(*Stepping into veranda after a glance at the bed.*) *Punkah chor do!*

VOICE.—It's hard, Pip. So very, *very* hard after one year—just one year. (*Wailing.*) And I'm only twenty. Most girls aren't even married at twenty. Can't they do *anything* to help me? I don't *want* to die.

CAPT. G.—Hush, dear. You won't.

VOICE.—What's the use of talking? *Help* me! You've never failed me yet. Oh, Phil, help me to keep alive. (*Feverishly.*) I don't believe you wish me to live. You weren't a bit sorry when that horrid Baby thing died. I wish I'd killed Baby!

CAPT. G.—(*Drawing his hand across his forehead.*) It's more than a man's meant to bear—it's not right. (*Aloud.*) Minnie, love, I'd die for you if it would help.

VOICE.—No more death. There's enough already. Pip, don't *you* die too.

CAPT. G.—I wish I dared.

VOICE.—It says:—"Till Death do us part." Nothing after that . . . and so it would be no use. It stops at the dying.

Why does it stop there? Only such a very short life, too. Pip, I'm sorry we married.

CAPT. G.—No! Anything but that, Min!

VOICE.—Because you'll forget and I'll forget. Oh, Pip, *don't* forget! I always loved you, though I was cross sometimes. If I ever did anything that you didn't like, say you forgive me now.

CAPT. G.—You never did, darling. On my soul and honor you never did. I haven't a thing to forgive you.

VOICE.—I sulked for a whole week about those petunias. (*With a laugh.*) What a little wretch I was, and how grieved you were! Forgive me that, Pip.

CAPT. G.—There's nothing to forgive. It was my fault. They *were* too near the drive. For God's sake don't talk so, Minnie! There's such a lot to say and so little time to say it in.

VOICE.—Say that you'll always love me—until the end.

CAPT. G.—Until the end. (*Carried away.*) It's a lie. It *must* be, because we've loved each other. This isn't the end.

VOICE.—(*Relapsing into semi-delirium.*) *My* Church-service has an ivory cross on the back, and *it* says so, so it must be true. "Till death do us part." . . . But that's a lie. (*With a parody of* G.'s *manner.*) A damned lie! (*Recklessly.*) Yes, I can swear as well as Trooper Pip. I can't make my head think, though. That's because they cut

off my hair. How *can* one think with one's head all fuzzy? (*Pleadingly.*) Hold me, Pip! Keep me with you always and always. (*Relapsing.*) But if you marry the Thorniss girl when I'm dead, I'll come back and howl under our bedroom window all night. Oh, bother! You'll think I'm a jackal. Pip, what time is it?

CAPT. G.—A little before the dawn, dear.

VOICE.—I wonder where I shall be this time to-morrow?

CAPT. G.—Would you like to see the Padre?

VOICE.—Why should I? He'd tell me that I'm going to heaven; and that wouldn't be true, because you are here.—Do you recollect when he upset the cream-ice all over his trousers at the Gassers' tennis?

CAPT. G.—Yes, dear.

VOICE.—I often wondered whether he got another pair of trousers; but then his are so shiny all over that you really couldn't tell unless you were told. Let's call him in and ask.

CAPT. G.—(*Gravely.*) No. I don't think he'd like that. 'Your head comfy, Sweetheart?

VOICE.—(*Faintly with a sigh of contentment.*) Yeth! Gracious, Pip, when *did* you shave last? Your chin's worse than the barrel of a musical box. . . . No, don't lift it up. I like it. (*A pause.*) You said you've never cried at all. You're crying all over my cheek.

CAPT. G.—I—I—I can't help it, dear.

VOICE.—How funny! I couldn't cry now to save my life. (G. *shivers.*) *I* want to sing.

CAPT. G.—Won't it tire you? 'Better not, perhaps.

VOICE.—Why? I *won't* be ordered about! (*Begins in a hoarse quaver*) :—

Minnie bakes oaken cake, Minnie brews ale,
All because her Johnnie's coming home from the sea.
(That's parade, Pip).
And she grows red as a rose who was so pale:
And "Are you sure the church clock goes?" says she.

(*Pettishly.*) I knew I couldn't take the last note. How do the bass chords run? (*Puts out her hands and begins playing piano on the sheet.*)

CAPT. G.—(*Catching up hands.*) Ah! don't do that, Pussy, if you love me.

VOICE.—Love you? Of course I do. Who else should it be? (*A pause.*)

VOICE.—(*Very clearly.*) Pip, I'm going now. Something's choking me cruelly. (*Indistinctly.*) Into the dark . . . without you, my heart. . . . But it's a lie, dear. . . We mustn't believe it. . . . For ever and ever, living or dead. Don't let me go, my husband—hold me tight. . . . They can't . . . whatever happens. (*A cough.*) Pip—*my* Pip! Not for always . . . and . . . so . . . soon! (*Voice ceases.*)

Pause of ten minutes. G. *buries his face in*

the side of the bed while Ayah bends over bed from opposite side and feels MRS. G.'S *breast and forehead.*

CAPT. G.—(*Rising.*) *Doctor Sahib ko salaam do.*

AYAH.—(*Still by bedside, with a shriek.*) Ai! Ai! *Tuta—phuta!* My *Memsahib!* Not getting—not have got—*Pusseena agya!* (*Fiercely to* G.) TUM *jao Doctor Sahib ko jaldi! Oh!* my *Memsahib!*

DOCTOR.—(*Entering hastily.*) Come away, Gadsby. (*Bends over bed.*) Eh? The Dev—What inspired you to stop the punkah? Get out, man—go away—wait outside! *Go!* Here, Ayah! (*Over his shoulder to* G.) Mind, I promise nothing.

The dawn breaks as G. *stumbles into the garden.*

CAPT. M.—(*Reining up at the gate on his way to parade and very soberly.*) Old man, how goes?

CAPT. G.—(*Dazed.*) I don't quite know. Stay a bit. Have a drink or something. Don't run away. You're just getting amusing. Ha! Ha!

CAPT. M.—(*Aside.*) What *am* I let in for? Gaddy has aged ten years in the night.

CAPT. G.—(*Slowly, fingering charger's headstall.*) Your curb's too loose.

CAPT. M.—So it is. Put it straight, will you? (*Aside.*) I shall be late for parade. Poor Gaddy!

CAPT. G. *links and unlinks curb-chain aimlessly, and finally stands staring towards the veranda. The day brightens.*

DOCTOR.—(*Knocked out of professional gravity, tramping across flower-beds and shaking* G.'s *hands.*) It's—it's—it's!—Gadsby, there's a fair chance—a *dashed* fair chance! The flicker, y'know. The sweat, y'know! I *saw* how it would be. The punkah, y'know. Deuced clever woman that Ayah of yours. Just at the right time. A *dashed* good chance! No—you don't go in. We'll pull her through yet. I promise on my reputation—under Providence. Send a man with this note to Bingle. Two heads better than one. 'Specially the Ayah! *We'll* pull her round. (*Retreats hastily to house.*)

CAPT. G.—(*His head on neck of* M.'s *charger.*) Jack! I bub—bub—believe, I'm going to make a bub—bub—bloody exhibition of by-self.

CAPT. M.—(*Sniffing openly and feeling in his left cuff.*) I b-b—believe I'b doing it already. Old bad, what *cad* I say? I'b as pleased as—Cod *dab* you, Gaddy! You're one big idiot and I'b adother. (*Pulling himself together.*) Sit tight! Here comes the Devil dodger.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—(*Who is not in the Doctor's confidence.*) We— we are only men in these things, Gadsby. I know that I can say nothing now to help—

CAPT. M.—(*Jealously.*) Then don't say it! Leave him alone. It's not bad enough to croak over. Here, Gaddy, take the *chit* to Bingle and ride hell-for-leather. It'll do you good. I can't go.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—Do him good! (*Smiling.*) Give me the *chit* and I'll drive. Let him lie down. Your horse is blocking my cart—*please!*

CAPT. M.—(*Slowly, without reining back.*) I beg your pardon—I'll apologize. On paper if you like.

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN.—(*Flicking* M's *charger.*) That'll do, thanks. Turn in, Gadsby, and I'll bring Bingle back—ahem—" hell-for-leather."

CAPT. M.—(*Solus.*) It would ha' served me right if he had cut me across the face. He can drive too. I shouldn't care to go that pace in a bamboo cart. What a faith he must have in his Maker—of harness! Come *hup*, you brute! (*Gallops off to parade, blowing his nose, as the sun rises.*)

INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS.

MRS. G.—(*Very white and pinched, in morning wrapper at breakfast table.*) How big and strange the room looks, and oh, how glad I am to see it again! What dust, though! I must talk to the servants. Sugar, Pip? I've almost forgotten. (*Seriously.*) Wasn't I very ill?

CAPT. G.—Iller than I liked. (*Tenderly*)

Oh, you bad little Pussy, what a start you gave me!

MRS. G.—I'll never do it again.

CAPT. G.—You'd better not. And now get those poor pale cheeks pink again, or I shall be angry. Don't try to lift the urn. You'll upset it. Wait. (*Comes round to head of table and lifts urn.*)

MRS. G.—(*Quickly.*) *Khitmatgar, bow-archi-khana se kettly lao.* (*Drawing down* G.'s *face to her own.*) Pip dear, *I* remember.

CAPT. G.—What?

MRS. G.—That last terrible night.

CAPT. G.—Then just you forget all about it.

MRS. G.—(*Softly, her eyes filling.*) Never. It has brought us *very* close together, my husband. There! (*Interlude.*) I'm going to give Junda a *saree.*

CAPT. G.—I gave her fifty dibs.

MRS. G.—So she told me. It was a 'normous reward. Was I worth it? (*Several interludes.*) Don't! Here's the *khitmatgar.*—Two lumps or one, Sir?

CURTAIN.

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN.

"If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst they have wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains, on a January morning.* MRS. G. *arguing with bearer in back veranda.* CAPT. M. *rides up.*

CAPT. M.—'Mornin', Mrs. Gadsby. How's the Infant Phenomenon and the Proud Proprietor?

MRS. G.—You'll find them in the front veranda; go through the house. I'm Martha just now.

CAPT. M.—'Cumbered about with cares of *khitmatgars?* I fly.

Passes into front veranda where GADSBY *is watching* GADSBY JUNIOR, ætate *ten months, crawling about the matting.*

CAPT. M.—What's the trouble, Gaddy—spoiling an honest man's Europe morning this way? (*Seeing* G. JUNIOR.) By Jove, that

yearling's comin' on amazingly! Any amount of bone below the knee there.

CAPT. G.—Yes, he's a healthy little scoundrel. Don't you think his hair's growing?

M.—Let's have a look. Hi! Hst! Come here, General Luck, and we'll report on you.

MRS. G.—(*Within.*) What absurd name will you give him next? Why do you call him that?

M.—Isn't he our Inspector-General of Cavalry? Doesn't he come down in his seventeen-two perambulator every morning the Pink Hussars parade? Don't wriggle, Brigadier. Give us your private opinion on the way the third squadron went past. 'Trifle ragged, weren't they?

G.—A bigger set of tailors than the new draft I don't wish to see. They've given me more than my fair share—knocking the squadron out of shape. It's sickening!

M.—When you're in command, you'll do better, young 'un. Can't you walk yet? Grip my finger and try. (*To* G.) 'Twon't hurt his hocks, will it?

G.—Oh, no. Don't let him flop, though, or he'll lick all the blacking off your boots.

MRS. G.—(*Within.*) Who's destroying my son's character?

M.—And my Godson's. I'm ashamed of you, Gaddy. Punch your father in the eye, Jack! Don't you stand it! Hit him again!

G.—(*Sotto voce.*) Put The *Butcha* down and

come to the end of the veranda. I'd rather the Wife didn't hear—just now.

M.—You look awf'ly serious. Anything wrong?

G.—'Depends on your view entirely. I say, Jack, you won't think more hardly of me than you can help, will you? Come further this way. . . . The fact of the matter is that I've made up my mind—at least I'm thinking seriously of . . . cutting the Service.

M.—Hwhatt?

G.—Don't shout. I'm going to send in my papers.

M.—You! Are you mad?

G.—No—only married.

M.—Look here! What's the meaning of it all? You never intend to leave *us*. You *can't*. Isn't the best squadron of the best regiment of the best cavalry in all the world good enough for you?

G.—(*Jerking his head over his shoulder.*) She doesn't seem to thrive in this God-forsaken country, and there's The *Butcha* to be considered and all that, you know.

M.—Does she say that she doesn't like India?

G.—That's the worst of it. She won't for fear of leaving me.

M.—What are the Hills made for?

G.—Not for *my* wife, at any rate.

M.—You know too much, Gaddy, and—I don't like you any the better for it!

G.—Never mind that. She wants England, and The *Butcha* would be all the better for it. I'm going to chuck. You don't understand.

M.—(*Hotly.*) I understand *this*. One hundred and thirty-seven new horses to be licked into shape somehow before Luck comes round again; a hairy-heeled draft who'll give more trouble than the horses; a camp next cold weather for a certainty; ourselves the first on the roster; the Russian shindy ready to come to a head at five minutes' notice, and you, the best of us all, backing out of it all! Think a little, Gaddy. You *won't* do it.

G.—Hang it, a man has some duties towards his family, I suppose.

M.—I remember a man, though, who told me, the night after Amdheran, when we were picketed under Jagai, and he'd left his sword—by the way, did you ever pay Ranken for that sword?—in an Utmanzai's head—that man told me that he'd stick by me and the Pinks as long as he lived. I don't blame him for not sticking by me—I'm not much of a man—but I *do* blame him for not sticking by the Pink Hussars.

G.—(*Uneasily.*) We were little more than boys then. Can't you see, Jack, how things stand? 'Tisn't as if we were serving for our bread. We've all of us, more or less, got the filthy lucre. I'm luckier than some, perhaps. There's no *call* for me to serve on.

M.—None in the world for you or for us,

except the Regimental. If you don't choose to answer to *that*, of course . . .

G.—Don't be too hard on a man. You know that a lot of us only take up the thing for a few years and then go back to Town and catch on with the rest.

M.—Not lots, and they aren't some of *Us*.

G.—And then there are one's affairs at Home to be considered—my place and the rents, and all that. I don't suppose my father can last much longer, and that means the title, and so on.

M.—'Fraid you won't be entered in the Stud Book correctly unless you go Home? Take six months, then, and come out in October. If I could slay off a brother or two, I s'pose I should be a Marquis of sorts. Any fool can be that; but it needs *men*, Gaddy—men like you—to lead flanking squadrons properly. Don't you delude yourself into the belief that you're going Home to take your place and prance about among pink-nosed Cabuli dowagers. You aren't built that way. I know better.

G.—A man has a right to live his life as happily as he can. *You* aren't married.

M.—No—praise be to Providence and the one or two women who have had the good sense to *jawab* me.

G.—Then you don't know what it is to go into your own room and see your wife's head on the pillow, and when everything else is safe

and the house *bunded* up for the night, to wonder whether the roof-beams won't give and kill her.

M.—(*Aside.*) Revelations first and second! (*Aloud.*) So-o! I knew a man who got squiffy at our Mess once and confided to me that he never helped his wife on to her horse without praying that she'd break her neck before she came back. All husbands aren't alike, you see.

G.—What on earth has that to do with my case? The man must ha' been mad, or his wife as bad as they make 'em.

M.—(*Aside.*) 'No fault of yours if either weren't all you say. You've forgotten the time when you were insane about the Herriott woman. You always were a good hand at forgetting. (*Aloud.*) Not more mad than men who go to the other extreme. Be reasonable, Gaddy. Your roof-beams are sound enough.

G.—That was only a way of speaking. I've been uneasy and worried about the Wife ever since that awful business three years ago—when—I nearly lost her. Can you wonder?

M.—Oh, a shell never falls twice in the same place. You've paid your toll to misfortune—why should your Wife be picked out more than anybody else's?

G.—I can *talk* just as reasonably as you can, but you don't understand—you don't understand. And then there's The *Butcha*. Deuce knows where the Ayah takes him to sit

in the evening! He has a bit of a cough. Haven't you noticed it?

M.—Bosh! The Brigadier's jumping out of his skin with pure condition. He's got a muzzle like a rose-leaf and the chest of a two-year-old. What's demoralized you?

G.—Funk. That's the long and the short of it. Funk!

M.—But what *is* there to funk?

G.—Everything. It's ghastly.

M.—Ah! I see.

> "You don't want to fight,
> And by Jingo when we do,
> You've got the kid, you've got the Wife,
> You've got the money, too."

That's about the case, eh?

G.—I suppose that's it. But it's not for myself. It's because of *them*. At least, I think it is.

M.—Are you sure? Looking at the matter in a cold-blooded light, the Wife is provided for even if you were wiped out to-night. She has an ancestral home to go to, money, and the Brigadier to carry on the illustrious name.

G.—Then it is for myself or because they are part of me. You don't see it. My life's so good, so pleasant, as it is, that I want to make it quite safe. Can't you understand?

M.—Perfectly. "Shelter-pit for the Orf'cer's charger," as they say in the Line.

G.—And I have everything to my hand to make it so. I'm sick of the strain and the worry for their sakes out here; and there isn't a single real difficulty to prevent my dropping it altogether. It'll only cost me . . . Jack, I hope you'll never know the shame that I've been going through for the past six months.

M.—Hold on there! I don't wish to be told. Every man has his moods and tenses sometimes.

G.—(*Laughing bitterly.*) Has he? What do you call craning over to see where the near-fore lands?

M.—In my case it means that I have been on the Considerable Bend, and have come to parade with a Head and a Hand. It passes in three strides.

G.—(*Lowering voice.*) It *never* passes with me, Jack. I'm always thinking about it. Phil Gadsby funking a fall on parade! Sweet picture, isn't it! Draw it for me.

M.—(*Gravely.*) Heaven forbid! A man like you can't be as bad as that. A fall is no nice thing, but one never gives it a thought.

G.—Doesn't one? Wait till you've got a wife and a youngster of your own, and then you'll know how the roar of the squadron behind you turns you cold all up the back.

M.—(*Aside.*) And this man led at Amdheran after Bagal-Deasin went under, and we were all mixed up together, and he came out of the show dripping like a butcher! (*Aloud.*)

Skittles! The men can always open out, and you can always pick your way more or less. *We* haven't the dust to bother us, as the men have, and whoever heard of a horse stepping on a man?

G.—Never—as long as he can see. But did they open out for poor Errington?

M.—Oh, this is childish!

G.—I know it is, and worse than that. I don't care. You've ridden Van Loo. Is he the sort of brute to pick his way—'specially when we're coming up in column of troop with any pace on?

M.—Once in a Blue Moon do we gallop in column of troop, and then only to save time. Aren't three lengths enough for you?

G.—Yes—quite enough. They just allow for the full development of the smash. I'm talking like a cur, I know: but I tell you that, for the past three months, I've felt every hoof of the squadron in the small of my back every time that I've led.

M.—But Gaddy, this is awful!

G.—Isn't it lovely? Isn't it royal? A Captain of the Pink Hussars watering up his charger before parade like the blasted boozing Colonel of a Black Regiment!

M.—You never did!

G.—Once only. He squelched like a *mus-suck*, and the Troop-Sergeant-Major cocked his eye at me. You know old Haffy's eye. I was afraid to do it again.

M.—I should think so. That was the best way to rupture old Van Loo's tummy, and make him crumple you up. You *knew* that.

G.—I didn't care. It took the edge off him.

M.—"Took the edge off him!" Gaddy, you—you—you *mustn't*, you know! Think of the men.

G.—That's another thing I am afraid of. D'you s'pose they know?

M.—Let's hope not; but they're deadly quick to spot a skrim—little things of that kind. See here, old man, send the Wife Home for the hot weather and come to Kashmir with me. We'll start a boat on the Dal or cross the Rhotang—ibex or idleness—which you please. Only *come!* You're a bit off your oats and you're talking nonsense. Look at the Colonel—swag-bellied rascal that he is. He has a wife and no end of a bow-window of his own. Can any one of us ride round him—chalkstones and all? I can't, and I think I can shove a crock along a bit.

G.—Some men are different. I haven't the nerve. Lord help me, I haven't the nerve! I've taken up a hole and a half to get my knees well under the wallets. I can't help it. I'm so afraid of anything happening to me. On my soul, I ought to be broke in front of the squadron, for cowardice.

M.—Ugly word, that. I should never have the courage to own up.

G.—I meant to lie about my reasons when I

began, but—I've got out of the habit of lying to you, old man. Jack, you won't? . . . But I know you won't.

M.—Of course not. (*Half aloud.*) The Pinks are paying dearly for their Pride.

G.—Eh? Wha-at?

M.—Don't you know? We've called Mrs. Gadsby the Pride of the Pink Hussars ever since she came to us.

G.—'Tisn't *her* fault. Don't think that. It's all mine.

M.—What does she say?

G.—I haven't exactly put it before her. She's the best little woman in the world, Jack, and all that . . . but she wouldn't counsel a man to stick to his calling if it came between him and her. At least, I think—

M.—Never mind. Don't tell her what you told me. Go on the Peerage and Landed-Gentry tack.

G.—She'd see through it. She's five times cleverer than I am.

M.—(*Aside.*) Then she'll accept the sacrifice and think a little bit worse of him for the rest of her days.

G.—(*Absently.*) I say, do you despise me?

M.—'Queer way of putting it. Have you ever been asked that question? Think a minute. What answer used you to give?

G.—So bad as *that?* I'm not entitled to expect anything more; but it's a bit hard when one's best friend turns round and—

M.—So *I* have found. But you will have consolations—Bailiffs and Drains and Liquid Manure and the Primrose League, and, perhaps, if you're lucky, the Colonelcy of a Yeomanry Cav-al-ry Regiment—all uniform and no riding, I believe. How old are you?

G.—Thirty-three. I know it's . . .

M.—At forty you'll be a fool of a J. P. landlord. At fifty you'll own a bath-chair, and The Brigadier, if he takes after you, will be fluttering the dove-cotes of—what's the particular dunghill you're going to? Also, Mrs. Gadsby will be fat.

G.—(*Limply.*) This is rather more than a joke.

M.—D'you think so? Isn't cutting the Service a joke? It generally takes a man fifty years to arrive at it. You're quite right, though. It is more than a joke. You've managed it in thirty-three.

G.—Don't make me feel worse than I do. Will it satisfy you if I own that I am a shirker, a skrimshanker, and a coward?

M.—It will *not*, because I'm the only man in the world who can talk to you like this without being knocked down. You mustn't take all that I've said to heart in this way. I only spoke—a lot of it at least—out of pure selfishness because, because—Oh, damn it all old man,—I don't know *what* I shall do withoutyou. Of course, you've got the money and the place and all that—and there are two very

good reasons why you should take care of yourself.

G.—'Doesn't make it any the sweeter. I'm backing out—I know I am. I always had a soft drop in me somewhere—and I daren't risk any danger to *them*.

M.—Why in the world should you? You're bound to think of your family—bound to think. Er-hmm. If I wasn't a younger son I'd go too—be shot if I wouldn't!

G.—Thank you, Jack. It's a kind lie, but it's the blackest you've told for some time. I know what I'm doing, and I'm going into it with my eyes open. Old man, I *can't* help it. What would you do if you were in my place?

M. — (*Aside.*) 'Couldn't conceive any woman getting permanently between me and the Regiment. (*Aloud.*) 'Can't say. 'Very likely I should do no better. I'm sorry for you—awf'ly sorry—but "if them's your sentiments" I believe, I really do, that you are acting wisely.

G.—Do you? I hope you do. (*In a whisper.*) Jack, be very sure of yourself before you marry. I'm an ungrateful ruffian to say this, but marriage—even as good a marriage as mine has been—hampers a man's work, it cripples his sword-arm, and oh, it plays Hell with his notions of duty! Sometimes—good and sweet as she is—sometimes I could wish that I had kept my freedom. . . . No, I don't mean that exactly.

MRS. G. —(*Coming down veranda.*) What are you wagging your head over, Pip?

M. — (*Turning quickly.*) Me, as usual. The old sermon. Your husband is recommending me to get married. 'Never saw such a one-idead man!

MRS. G.—Well, why don't you? I dare say you would make some woman very happy.

G.—There's the Law and the Prophets, Jack. Never mind the Regiment. Make a woman happy. (*Aside.*) O Lord!

M.—We'll see. I must be off to make a Troop Cook desperately unhappy. I won't have the wily Hussar fed on G. B. T. shinbones. . . . (*Hastily.*) Surely black ants can't be good for The Brigadier. He's picking 'em off the *chitai* and eating 'em. Here, Señor Comandante Don Grubbynose, come and talk to me. (*Lifts* G. *junior in his arms.*) 'Want my watch? You won't be able to put it into your mouth, but you can try. (G. *junior drops watch, breaking dial and hands.*)

MRS. G.—Oh, Captain Mafflin, I *am* so sorry! Jack, you bad, bad little villain. Ahhh!

M.—It's not the least consequence, I assure you. He'd treat the world in the same way if he could get it into his hands. Everything's made to be played with and broken, isn't it, young 'un? (*Tenderly.*) "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief that thou hast done."

. . . . .

MRS. G.—Mafflin didn't at all like his watch being broken, though he was too polite to say so. It was entirely his fault for giving it to the child. Dem little puds are werry, werry feeble, aren't dey, my Jack-in-the-box? (*To* G.) What did he want to see you for?

G.—Regimental shop o' sorts.

MRS. G.—The Regiment! *Always* the Regiment. On my word, I sometimes feel jealous of Mafflin.

G.—(*Wearily.*) Poor old Jack! I don't think you need. Isn't it time for The *Butcha* to have his nap? Bring a chair out here, dear. I've got something to talk over with you.

AND THIS IS THE END OF THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS.

L'ENVOI.

WHAT is the moral? Who rides may read.
When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed;
But a fool to wait for the laggard behind.
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry, "Turn again,"
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself—
Falls by himself with himself to blame;
One may attain and to him is the pelf,
Loot of the city in Gold or Fame:
Plunder of earth shall be all his own
Who travels the fastest and travels alone.

Wherefore the more ye be holpen and stayed—
Stayed by a friend in the hour of toil,
Sing the heretical song I have made—
His be the labor and yours be the spoil.
Win by his aid and the aid disown—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

THE COURTING OF DINAH SHADD.

I.

All day I had followed at the heels of a pursuing army, engaged on one of the finest battles that ever camp of exercise beheld. Thirty thousand troops had by the wisdom of the government of India been turned loose over a few thousand square miles of country to practise in peace what they would never attempt in war. The Army of the South had finally pierced the center of the Army of the North, and was pouring through the gap hot-foot, to capture a city of strategic importance. Its front extended fan wise, the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route backward to the divisional transport columns, and all the lumber that trails behind an army on the move. On its right the broken left of the Army of the North was flying in mass, chased by the Southern horse and hammered by the Southern guns, till these had been pushed far beyond the limits of their last support. Then the flying Army of the North sat down to rest, while the commandant of the pur-

suing force telegraphed that he held it in check and observation.

Unluckily he did not observe that three miles to his right flank a flying column of Northern horse, with a detachment of Ghoorkhas and British troops, had been pushed round, as fast as the falling light allowed, to cut across the entire rear of the Southern Army, to break, as it were, all the ribs of the fan where they converged, by striking at the transport reserve, ammunition, and artillery supplies. Their instructions were to go in, avoiding the few scouts who might not have been drawn off by the pursuit, and create sufficient excitement to impress the Southern Army with the wisdom of guarding their own flank and rear before they captured cities. It was a pretty maneuver, neatly carried out.

Speaking for the second division of the Southern Army, our first intimation of it was at twilight, when the artillery were laboring in deep sand, most of the escort were trying to help them out, and the main body of the infantry had gone on. A Noah's ark of elephants, camels, and the mixed menagerie of an Indian transport train bubbled and squealed behind the guns, when there rose up from nowhere in particular British infantry to the extent of three companies, who sprung to the heads of the gun-horses, and brought all to a standstill amid oaths and cheers.

"How's that, umpire?" said the major commanding the attack, and with one voice the drivers and limber gunners answered, "Hout!" while the colonel of artillery sputtered.

"All your scouts are charging our main body," said the major. "Your flanks are unprotected for two miles. I think we've broken the back of this division. And listen! there go the Ghoorkhas!"

A weak fire broke from the rear-guard more than a mile away, and was answered by cheerful howlings. The Ghoorkhas, who should have swung clear of the second division, had stepped on its tail in the dark, but, drawing off, hastened to reach the next line, which lay almost parallel to us, five or six miles away.

Our column swayed and surged irresolutely—three batteries, the divisional ammunition reserve, the baggage, and a section of hospital and bearer corps. The commandant ruefully promised to report himself "cut up" to the nearest umpire, and commending his cavalry and all other cavalry to the care of Eblis, toiled on to resume touch with the rest of the division.

"We'll bivouac here to-night," said the major. "I have a notion that the Ghoorkhas will get caught. They may want us to reform on. Stand easy till the transport gets away."

A hand caught my beast's bridle and led

him out of the choking dust ; a larger hand deftly canted me out of the saddle and two of the hugest hands in the world received me sliding. Pleasant is the lot of the special correspondent who falls into such hands as those of Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd.

"An' that's all right," said the Irishman, calmly. "We thought we'd find you somewheres here by. Is there anything of yours in the transport? Orth'ris'll fetch ut out."

Ortheris did "fetch ut out" from under the trunk of an elephant, in the shape of a servant and an animal, both laden with medical comforts. The little man's eyes sparkled.

"If the brutil an' licentious soldiery av these parts gets sight av the thruck," said Mulvaney, making practised investigation, "they'll loot ev'rything. They're bein' fed on iron-filin's an' dog biscuit these days, but glory's no compensation for a bellyache. Praise be, we're here to protect you, sorr. Beer, sausage, bread (soft, an' that's a cur' osity), soup in a tin, whisky by the smell av ut, an' fowls. Mother av Moses, but ye take the field like a confectioner! 'Tis scand'lus."

"'Ere's a orficer," said Ortheris, significantly. "When the sergent's done lushin', the privit may clean the pot."

I bundled several things into Mulvaney's haversack before the major's hand fell on

my shoulder, and he said, tenderly: "Requisitioned for the Queen's service. Wolseley was quite wrong about special correspondents. They are the best friends of the soldier. Come an' take pot-luck with us to-night."

And so it happened amid laughter and shoutings that my well-considered commissariat melted away to reappear on the mess-table, which was a water-proof sheet spread on the ground. The flying column had taken three days' rations with it, and there be few things nastier than government rations—especially when government is experimenting with German toys. Erbswurst, tinned beef, of surpassing tinniness, compressed vegetables, and meat biscuits may be nourishing, but what Thomas Atkins wants is bulk in his inside. The major, assisted by his brother officers, purchased goats for the camp, and so made the experiment of no effect. Long before the fatigue-party sent to collect brushwood had returned, the men were settled down by their valises, kettles and pots had appeared from the surrounding country, and were dangling over fires as the kid and the compressed vegetables bubbled together; there rose a cheerful clinking of mess tins, outrageous demands for a "little more stuffin' with that there liver wing," and gust on gust of chaff as pointed as a bayonet and as delicate as a gun-butt.

"The boys are in a good temper," said the major. "They'll be singing presently. Well, a night like this is enough to keep them happy."

Over our heads burned the wonderful Indian stars, which are not all pricked in on one plane, but preserving an orderly perspective, draw the eye through the velvet darkness of the void up to the barred doors of heaven itself. The earth was a gray shadow more unreal than the sky. We could hear her breathing lightly in the pauses between the howling of the jackals, the movement of the wind in the tamarisks, and the fitful mutter of musketry fire leagues away to the left. A native woman in some unseen hut began to sing, the mail train thundered past on its way to Delhi, and a roosting crow cawed drowsily. Then there was a belt-loosening silence about the fires, and the even breathing of the crowded earth took up the story.

The men, full fed, turned to tobacco and song—their officers with them. Happy is the subaltern who can win the approval of the musical critics in his regiment, and is honored among the more intricate step dancers. By him, as by him who plays cricket craftily, will Thomas Atkins stand in time of need when he will let a better officer go on alone. The ruined tombs of forgotten Mussulman saints heard the ballad of "Agra Town," "The Buffalo Bat-

tery," "Marching to Cabul," "The long, long Indian Day," "The Place Where the Punkah Coolie Died," and that crashing chorus which announces

> "Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
> Firm hand, and eagle eye
> Must he acquire who would aspire
> To see the gray boar die."

To-day, of all those jovial thieves who appropriated my commissariat, and lay and laughed round that water-proof sheet, not one remains. They went to camps that were not of exercise, and battles without umpires. Burmah, the Soudan, and the frontier fever and fight took them in their time.

I drifted across to the men's fires in search of Mulvaney, whom I found greasing his feet by the blaze. There is nothing particularly lovely in the sight of a private thus engaged after a long day's march, but when you reflect on the exact proportion of the "might, majesty, dominion, and power" of the British Empire that stands on those feet, you take an interest in the proceedings.

"There's a blister—bad luck to ut!—on the heel," said Mulvaney. "I can't touch it. Prick ut out, little man."

Ortheris produced his housewife, eased the trouble with a needle, stabbed Mulvaney in the calf with the same weapon, and was incontinently kicked into the fire.

"I've bruk the best av my toes over you, ye grinnin' child av disruption!" said Mulvaney, sitting cross-legged and nursing his feet; then, seeing me: "Oh, ut's you, sorr! Be welkim, an' take that maraudin' scut's place. Jock, hould him down on the cindhers for a bit."

But Ortheris escaped and went elsewhere as I took possession of the hollow he had scraped for himself and lined with his great-coat. Learoyd, on the other side of the fire, grinned affably, and in a minute fell fast asleep.

"There's the height av politeness for you," said Mulvaney, lighting his pipe with a flaming branch. "But Jock's eaten half a box av your sardines at wan gulp, an' I think the tin too. What's the best wid you, sorr; an' how did you happen to be on the losin' side this day when we captured you?"

"The Army of the South is winning all along the line," I said.

"Thin that line's the hangman's rope, savin' your presence. You'll learn to-morrow how we retreated to dhraw thim on before we made thim trouble, an' that's what a woman does. By the same token, we'll be attacked before the dawnin', an' ut would be betther not to slip your boots. How do I know that? By the light av pure reason. Here are three companies av us ever so far inside av the enemy's flank, an' a rowd av

roarin', t'arin', an' squealin' cavalry gone on just to turn out the whole nest ov thim. Av course the enemy will pursue by brigades like as not, an' then we'll have to run for ut. Mark my words. I am av the opinion av Polonius, whin he said : 'Don't fight wid ivry scut for the pure joy av fightin'; but if you do, knock the nose av him first an' frequint!' We ought to ha' gone on an' helped the Ghoorkhas."

"But what do you know about Polonius?" I demanded. This was a new side of Mulvaney's character.

"All that Shakespeare ever wrote, an' a dale more that the gallery shouted," said the man of war, carefully lacing his boots. "Did I not tell you av Silver's Theater in Dublin whin I was younger than I am now, an' a patron av the drama? Ould Silver wud never pay actor, man or woman, their just dues, an' by consequence his comp'nies was collapsible at the last minut. Then the bhoys would clamor to take a part, an' oft as not ould Silver made them pay for the fun. Faith, I've seen Hamlut played wid a new black eye, an' the Queen as full as a cornucopia. I remember wanst Hogin, that 'listed in the Black Tyrone an' was shot in South Africa, he sejuced ould Silver into givin' him Hamlut's part instid av me, that had a fine fancy for rhetoric in those days. Av course I wint into the gallery an' began to fill the pit wid other people's hats, an' I

passed the time av day to Hogin walkin' through Denmark like a hamstrung mule wid a pall on his back. Hamlut,' sez I, 'there's a hole inyour heel. Pull up your shtockin's, Hamlut,' sez I. 'Hamlut, Hamlut, for the love av decincy, dhrop that skull, an' pull up your shtockin's.' The whole house began to tell him that. He stopped his soliloquishms mid between. 'My shtockin's may be comin' down, or they may not,' sez he, screwin' his eye into the gallery, for well he knew who I was; 'but afther the performince is over, me an' the Ghost'll trample the guts out av you, Terence, wid your ass's bray.' An' that's how I come to know about Hamlut. Eyah! Those days, those days! Did you iver have onendin' devilmint, an' nothin' to pay for it in your life, sorr?"

"Never without having to pay," I said.

"That's thrue. 'Tis mane, whin you considher on ut; but ut's the same wid horse or fut. A headache if you dhrink, an' a bellyache if you eat too much, an' a heartache to kape all down. Faith, the beast only gets the colic, an' he's the lucky man."

He dropped his head and stared into the fire, fingering his mustache the while. From the far side of the bivouac the voice of Corbet-Nolan, senior subaltern of B Company, uplifted itself in an ancient and much-appreciated song of sentiment, the men moaning melodiously behind him:

"The north wind blew coldly, she dropped from that hour,
My own little Kathleen, my sweet little Kathleen.
Kathleen, my Kathleen, Kathleen O'Moore!"

with forty-five *o's* in the last word. Even at that distance you might have cut the soft South Irish accent with a shovel.

"For all we take we must pay; but the price is cruel high," murmured Mulvaney when the chorus had ceased.

"What's the trouble?" I said gently, for I knew that he was a man of an inextinguishable sorrow.

"Hear now," said he. "Ye know what I am now. I know what I mint to be at the beginnin' av my service. I've tould you time an' again, an' what I have not, Dinah Shadd has. An' what am I? Oh, Mary Mother av Hiven! an ould dhrunken, untrustable baste av a privit that has seen the regiment change out from colonel to drummer-boy, not wanst or twict, but scores av times! Ay, scores! An' me not so near gettin' promotion as in the furst. An' me livin' on an' kapin' clear o' clink not by my own good conduck, but the kindness av some orf'cer-bhoy young enough to be son to me! Do I not know ut? Can I not tell whin I'm passed over at p'rade, tho' I'm rockin' full av liquor an' ready to fall all in wan piece, such as even a suckin' child might see, bekase, 'Oh, 'tis only ould Mulvaney!' An' whin I'm let

off in the ord'ly-room, through some thrick av the tongue an' a ready answer an' the ould man's mercy, is ut smilin' I feel whin I fall away an' go back to Dinah Shadd, thryin' to carry ut all off as a joke? Not I. 'Tis hell to me—dumb hell through ut all; an' next time whin the fit comes I will be as bad again. Good cause the reg'ment has to know me for the best soldier in ut. Better cause have I to know mesilf for the worst man. I'm only fit to tache the new drafts what I'll never learn myself; an' I am sure as tho' I heard ut, that the minut wan av these pink-eyed recruities gets away from my 'Mind ye, now,' an' 'Listen to this, Jim, bhoy,' sure I am that the sergint houlds me up to him for a warnin'. So I tache, as they say at musketry instruction, by direct an' ricochet fire. Lord be good to me! for I have stud some trouble."

"Lie down and go to sleep," said I, not being able to comfort or advise. "You're the best man in the regiment, and, next to Ortheris, the biggest fool. Lie down, and wait till we're attacked. What force will they turn out? Guns, think you?"

"Thry that wid your lorrds an' ladies, twistin' an' turnin' the talk, tho' you mint ut well. Ye cud say nothin' to help me; an' yet ye never knew what cause I had to be what I am."

"Begin at the beginning and go on to the end," I said, royally. "But rake up

the fire a bit first." I passed Ortheris' bayonet for a poker.

"That shows how little you know what to do," said Mulvaney, putting it aside. "Fire takes all the heart out av the steel, an' the next time, maybe, that our little man is fightin' for his life his brad-awl'll break, an' so you'll 'ave killed him, m'anin' no more than to kape yourself warm. 'Tis a recruitie's thrick that. 'Pass the cl'anin'-rod, sorr."

I snuggled down, abashed, and after an interval the low, even voice of Mulvaney began.

II.

"Did I ever tell you how Dinah Shadd came to be wife av mine?"

I dissembled a burning anxiety that I had felt for some months—ever since Dinah Shadd, the strong, the patient, and the infinitely tender, had, of her own good love and free will, washed a shirt for me, moving in a barren land where washing was not.

"I can't remember," I said, casually. "Was it before or after you made love to Annie Bragin, and got no satisfaction?"

The story of Annie Bragin is written in another place. It is one of the many episodes in Mulvaney's checkered career.

"Before—before—long before was that business av Annie Bragin an' the corp'ril's

ghost. Never woman was the worse for me whin I had married Dinah. There's a time for all things, an' I know how to kape all things in place—barrin' the dhrink, that kapes me in my place, wid no hope av comin' to be aught else."

"Begin at the beginning," I insisted, "Mrs. Mulvaney told me that you married her when you were quartered in Krab Bokhar barracks."

"An' the same is a cess-pit," said Mulvaney, piously. "She spoke thrue, did Dinah. 'Twas this way. Talkin' av that, have ye iver fallen in love, sorr?"

I preserved the silence of the damned. Mulvaney continued:

"Thin I will assume that ye have not. I did. In the days av my youth, as I have more than wanst tould you, I was a man that filled the eye an' delighted the sowl av women. Niver man was hated as I have been. Niver man was loved as I—no, not within half a day's march av ut. For the first five years av my service, whin I was what I wud give my sowl to be now, I tuk whatever was widin my reach, an' digested ut, an' that's more than most men can say. Dhrink I tuk, an' ut did me no harm. By the hollow av Hiven, I could play wid four women at wanst, an' kape thim from findin' out anything about the other three, and smile like a full-blown marigold through ut all. Dick Coulhan, of the battery we'll have

down on us to-night, could dhrive his team no better than I mine ; an' I hild the worser cattle. An' so I lived an' so I was happy till afther that business wid Annie Bragin—she that turned me off as cool as a meat-safe, an' taught me where I stud in the mind av an honest woman. 'Twas no sweet dose to take.

"Afther that I sickened awhile an' tuk thought to my reg'mental work, conceiting mesilf I wud study an' be a sargint, an' a major-gineral twinty minutes afther that. But on top o' my ambitiousness there was an empty place in my sowl, an' me own opinion av mesilf cud not fill ut. Sez I to mesilf: 'Terence, you're a great man an' the best set up in the reg'ment. Go on an' get promotion.' Sez mesilf to me, 'What for?' Sez I to mesilf, 'For the glory av ut.' Sez mesilf to me, 'Will that fill these two strong arrums av yours, Terence?' 'Go to the devil,' sez I to mesilf. 'Go to the married lines,' sez mesilf to me. ''Tis the same thing,' sez I to mesilf. 'Av you're the same man, ut is,' said mesilf to me. An' wid that I considhered on ut a long while. Did you iver feel that way, sorr?"

I snored gently, knowing that if Mulvaney were uninterrupted, he would go on. The clamor from the bivouac fires beat up to the stars as the rival singers of the companies were pitted against each other.

"So I felt that way, an' a bad time ut was. Wanst, bein' a fool, I went into the married lines, more for the sake av speakin' to our ould color-sergint Shadd than for any thruck wid wimmen-folk. I was a corp'ril then—rejuced aftherwards; but a corp'ril then. I've got a photograft av mesilf to prove ut. 'You'll take a cup av tay wid us?' sez he. 'I will that,' I sez; 'tho' tay is not my divarsion.' 'Twud be better for you if ut were,' sez ould Mother Shadd. An' she had ought to know, for Shadd, in the ind av his service, dhrank bung-full each night.

"Wid that I tuk off my gloves—there was pipe-clay in thim so that they stud alone—an' pulled up my chair, lookin' round at the china ornamints an' bits av things in the Shadds' quarters. They were things that belonged to a woman, an' no camp kit, here to-day an' dishipated next. 'You're comfortable in this place, sergint,' sez I. 'Tis the wife that did ut, boy,' sez he, pointin' the stem av his pipe to ould Mother Shadd, an' she smacked the top av his bald head upon the compliment. 'That manes you want money,' sez she.

"An' thin—an' thin whin the kettle was to be filled, Dinah came in—my Dinah—her sleeves rowled up to the elbow, an' her hair in a gowlden glory over her forehead, the big blue eyes beneath twinklin' like stars on a frosty night, an' the tread of her two

feet lighter than waste paper from the colonel's basket in ord'ly-room when ut's emptied. Bein' but a shlip av a girl, she went pink at seein' me, an' I twisted me mustache an' looked at a picture forninst the wall. Never show a woman that ye care the snap av a finger for her, an' begad she'll come bleatin' to your boot heels."

"I suppose that's why you followed Annie Bragin till everybody in the married quarters laughed at you," said I, remembering that unhallowed wooing, and casting off the disguise of drowsiness.

"I'm layin' down the gineral theory av the attack," said Mulvaney, driving his foot into the dying fire. "If you read the 'Soldier's Pocket-Book,' which never any soldier reads, you'll see that there are exceptions. When Dinah was out av the door (an' 'twas as tho' the sunlight had gone too), 'Mother av Hiven, sergint!' sez I, 'but is that your daughter?' 'I've believed that way these eighteen years,' sez ould Shadd, his eyes twinklin.' 'But Mrs. Shadd has her own opinion, like ivry other woman.' 'Tis wid yours this time, for a mericle,' sez Mother Shadd. 'Then why, in the name av fortune, did I never see her before?' sez I. 'Bekaze you've been thraipsin' round wid the married women these three years past. She was a bit av a child till last year, an' she shot up wid the spring,' sez ould Mother Shadd. "I'll thraipse no more,'

sez I. 'D'you mane that?' sez ould Mother Shadd, lookin' at me sideways, like a hen looks at a hawk whin the chickens are runnin' free. "Try me, an' tell,' sez I. Wid that I pulled on my gloves, dhrank off the tea, an' wint out av the house as stiff as at gineral p'rade, for well I knew that Dinah Shadd's eyes were in the small av my back out av the scullery window. Faith, that was the only time I mourned I was not a cav'lryman, for the sake av the spurs to jingle."

"I wint out to think, an' I did a powerful lot av thinkin', but ut all came round to that shlip av a girl in the dotted blue dhress, wid the blue eyes an' the sparkil in them. Thin I kept off canteen, an' I kept to the married quarthers or near by on the chanst av meetin' Dinah. Did I meet her? Oh, my time past, did I not, wid a lump in my throat as big as my valise, an' my heart goin' like a farrier's forge on a Saturday mornin'! 'Twas 'Good-day to ye, Miss Dinah,' an' 'Good-day t'you, corp'ril,' for a week or two, an' divil a bit further could I get, bekase av the respict I had to that girl that I cud ha' broken betune finger an' thumb."

Here I giggled as I recalled the gigantic figure of Dinah Shadd when she handed me my shirt.

"Ye may laugh," grunted Mulvaney. "But I'm speakin' the trut', an' 'tis you that are in fault. Dinah was a girl that wud ha'

taken the imperiousness out av the Duchess av Clonmel in those days. Flower hand, foot av shod air, an' the eyes av the mornin' she had. That is my wife to-day—ould Dinah, an' never aught else than Dinah Shadd to me.

"'Twas after three weeks standin' off an' on, an' niver makin' headway excipt through the eyes, that a little drummer-boy grinned in me face whin I had admonished him wid the buckle av my belt for riotin' all over the place. 'An' I'm not the only wan that doesn't kape to barricks,' sez he. I tuk him by the scruff av his neck—my heart was hung on a hair-trigger those days, you will understand—an' 'Out wid ut,' sez I, 'or I'll lave no bone av you unbruk.' Speak to Dempsey,' sez he, howlin'. 'Dempsey which,' sez I, 'ye unwashed limb av Satan?" 'Of the Bobtailed Dhragoons,' sez he. 'He's seen her home from her aunt's house in the civil lines four times this fortnight.' 'Child,' sez I, dhroppin' him, 'your tongue's stronger than your body. Go to your quarters. I'm sorry I dhressed you down.'

"At that I went four ways to wanst huntin' Dempsey. I was mad to think that wid all my airs among women I shud ha' been ch'ated by a basin-faced fool av a cav'lryman not fit to trust on a mule thrunk. Presintly I found him in our lines—the Bobtails was quartered next us—an' a tallowy, top-heavy son av a she-mule he was, wid

his big brass spurs an' his plastrons on his epigastons an' all. But he niver flinched a hair.

"'A word wid you, Dempsey,' sez I. 'You've walked wid Dinah Shadd four times this fortnight gone.'

"'What's that to you?" sez he. 'I'll walk forty times more, an' forty on top av that, ye shovel-futted, clod-breakin, infantry lance-corp'ril."

"Before I cud gyard, he had his gloved fist home on me cheek, an' down I went full sprawl. 'Will that content you?' sez he, blowin' on his knuckles for all the world like a Scots Greys orf'cer. 'Content?' sez I. 'For your own sake, man, take off your spurs, peel your jackut, and, onglove. 'Tis the beginnin' av the overture. Stand up!' "He stud all he knew, but he niver peeled his jackut, an' his shoulders had no fair play. I was fightin' for Dinah Shadd an' that cut on me cheek. What hope had he forninst me? 'Stand up!' sez I, time an' again, when he was beginnin' to quarter the ground an' gyard high an' go large. 'This isn't ridin'-school,' sez I. 'Oh, man, stand up, an' let me get at ye!' But whin I saw he wud be runnin' about, I grup his shtock in me left an' his waist-belt in me right, an' swung him clear to me right front, head undher, he hammerin' me nose till the wind was knocked out av him on the bare ground. 'Stand up,' sez I, 'or I'll kick your

head into your chest.' An' I wud ha' done ut, too, so ragin' mad I was.

"'Me collar-bone's bruk,' sez he. 'Help me back to lines. I'll walk wid her no more.' So I helped him back."

"And was his collar-bone broken?" I asked, for I fancied that only Learoyd could neatly accomplish that terrible throw.

"He pitched on his left shoulder-point. It was. Next day the news was in both barracks; an' whin I met Dinah Shadd wid a cheek like all the reg'mintal tailors' samples, there was no 'Good mornin', corp'ril,' or aught else. 'An' what have I done, Miss Shadd,' sez I, very bould, plantin' mesilf forninst her, 'that ye should not pass the time of day?'

"'Ye've half killed rough-rider Dempsey,' sez she, her dear blue eyes fillin' up.

"'Maybe,' sez I. 'Was he a friend av yours that saw ye home four times in a fortnight?'

"'Yes,' sez she, very bould; but her mouth was down at the corners. 'An'—an' what's that to you?'

"'Ask Dempsey,' sez I, purtendin' to go away.

"'Did you fight for me then, ye silly man?' she sez, tho' she knew ut all along.

"'Who else?' sez I; an' I tuk wan pace to the front.

"'I wasn't worth ut,' sez she, fingerin' her apron.

"'That's for me to say,' sez I. 'Shall I say ut?'

"'Yes,' sez, she, in a saint's whisper; an' at that I explained mesilf; an' she tould me what ivry man that is a man, an' many that is a woman, hears wanst in his life.

"'But what made ye cry at startin', Dinah, darlin'?' sez I.

"'Your—your bloody cheek,' sez she, duckin' her little head down on my sash (I was duty for the day), an' whimperin' like a sorrowful angel.

"Now, a man cud take that two ways. I tuk ut as pleased me best, an' my first kiss wid it. Mother av innocence! but I kissed her on the tip av the nose an' undher the eye, an' a girl that lets a kiss come tumble-ways like that has never been kissed before. Take note av that, sorr. Thin we wint, hand in hand, to ould Mother Shadd, like two little childher, an' she said it was no bad thing; an' ould Shadd nodded behind his pipe, an' Dinah ran away to her own room. That day I throd on rollin' clouds. All earth was too small to hould me. Begad, I cud ha' picked the sun out av the sky for a live coal to me pipe, so magnificent I was. But I tuk recruities at squad-drill, an' began with general battalion advance whin I shud ha' been balance-steppin' 'em. Eyah! that day! that day!"

A very long pause. "Well?" said I.

"It was all wrong," said Mulvaney, with

an enormous sigh. "An' sure I know that ev'ry bit av ut was me own foolishness. That night I tuk maybe the half av three pints—not enough to turn the hair of a man in his natural sinses. But I was more than half dhrunk wid pure joy, an' that canteen beer was so much whisky to me. I can't tell how ut came about, but *bekase* I had no thought for any wan except Dinah, *bekase* I hadn't slipped her little white arms from me neck five minutes, *bekase* the breath av her kiss was not gone from my mouth, I must go through the married lines on me way to quarthers, an' I must stay talkin' to a red-headed Mullingar heifer av a girl, Judy Sheehy, that was daughter to Mother Sheehy, the wife av Nick Sheehy, the canteen sergint—the black curse av Shielygh be on the whole brood that are above groun' this day!

"'An' what are ye houldin' your head that high for, corp'ril?' sez Judy. 'Come in an' thry a cup av tay,' she sez, standin' in the doorway.

"Bein' an onbustable fool, an' thinkin' av anythin' but tay, I wint.

"'Mother's at canteen,' sez Judy, smoothin' the hair av hers that was like red snakes, an' lookin' at me cornerways out av her green cat's eyes. 'Ye will not mind, corp'ril?'

"'I can endure,' sez I. 'Ould Mother Sheehy bein' no divarsion av mine, nor her

daughter too.' Judy fetched the tea-things an' put thim on the table, leanin' over me very close to get them square. I dhrew back, thinkin' of Dinah.

"'Is ut afraid you are av a girl alone?" sez Judy.

"'No,' sez I. 'Why should I be?'

"'That rests wid the girl,' sez Judy, dhrawin' her chair next to mine.

"'Thin there let ut rest,' sez I; an' thinkin' I'd been a trifle onpolite, I sez, 'The tay's not quite sweet enough for me taste. Put your little finger in the cup, Judy; 'twill make ut necthar.'

"'What's necthar?' sez she.

"'Somethin' very sweet,' sez I; an' for the sinful life av me I cud not help lookin' at her out av the corner av my eye, as I was used to look at a woman.

"'Go on wid ye, corp'ril,' sez she. 'You're a flirt.'

"'On me sowl I'm not,' sez I.

"'Then you're a cruel handsome man, an' that's worse,' sez she, heavin' big sighs an' lookin, crossways.

"'You know your own mind,' sez I.

"'Twud be better for me if I did not,' she sez.

"'There's a dale to be said on both sides av that,' sez I, not thinkin'.

"'Say your own part av ut, then, Terence, darlin',' sez she; 'for begad I'm thinkin' I've said too much or too little for an hon-

est girl ; ' an' wid that she put her arm round me neck an' kissed me.

" ' There's no more to be said afther that,' sez I, kissin' her back again. Oh, the mane scut that I was, my head ringin' wid Dinah Shadd ! How does ut come about, sorr, that whin a man has put the comether on wan woman he's sure bound to put ut on another ? 'Tis the same thing at musketry. Wan day ev'ry shot goes wide or into the bank, an' the next—lay high, lay low, sight or snap—ye can't get off the bull's-eye for ten shots runnin'."

" That only happens to a man who has had a good deal of experience ; he does it without thinking," I replied.

" Thankin' you for the complimint, sorr, ut may be so ; but I'm doubtin' whether you mint ut for a complimint. Hear, now. I sat there wid Judy on my knee, tellin' me all manner av nonsinse, an' only sayin' ' yes ' an' ' no, ' when I'd much better ha' kept tongue betune teeth. An' that was not an hour afther I had left Dinah. What I was thinkin' av I cannot say.

" Presently, quiet as a cat, ould Mother Sheehy came in velvet-dhrunk. She had her daughter's red hair, but 'twas bald in patches, an' I cud see in her wicked ould face, clear as lightnin', what Judy wud be twenty year to come. I was for jumpin' up, but Judy niver moved.

" Terence has promust, mother,' sez

she, an' the cowld sweat bruk out all over me.

"Ould Mother Sheehy sat down of a heap, an' began playin' wid the cups. 'Thin you're a well-matched pair,' she sez, very thick; 'for he's the biggest rogue that iver spoiled the queen's shoe-leather, an'—'

"'I'm off, Judy,' sez I. 'Ye should not talk nonsinse to your mother. Get her to bed, girl.'

"'Nonsinse?' sez the ould woman, prickin' up her ears like a cat, an' grippin' the table-edge. 'Twill be the most nonsinsical nonsinse for you, ye grinnin' badger, if nonsinse 'tis. Git clear, you. I'm goin' to bed.'

"I ran out into the dhark, me head in a stew an' me heart sick, but I had sinse enough to see that I'd brought ut all on mesilf. 'It's this to pass the time av day to a panjandhrum of hell-cats,' sez I. 'What I've said an' what I've not said do not matther. Judy an' her dam will hould me for a promust man, an' Dinah will give me the go, an' I desarve ut. I will go an' get dhrunk,' sez I, 'an' forgit about ut, for 'tis plain I'm not a marryin' man.'

"On me way to canteen I ran against Lascelles, color-sergint that was av E Comp'ny—a hard, hard man, wid a tormint av a wife. 'You've the head av a drowned man on your shoulders,' sez he, 'an' you're goin' where you'll get a worse wan.

Come back,' sez he. 'Let me go,' sez I. 'I've thrown me luck over the wall wid me own hand.' 'Then that 's not the way to get ut back,' sez he. 'Have out wid your throuble, ye fool-bhoy.' An' I tould him how the matther was.

"He sucked his lower lip. 'You've been thrapped,' sez he. 'Ju Sheehy wud be the betther for a man's name to hers as soon as she can. An' ye thought ye'd put the comether on her. That's the naturil vanity av the baste. Terence, you're a big born fool, but you're not bad enough to marry into that comp'ny. If you said anythin', an' for all your protestations I'm sure you did—or did not, which is worse—eat ut all. Lie like the father av all lies, but come out av ut free av Judy. Do I not know what ut is to marry a woman that was the very spit av Judy when she was young? I'm gettin' ould, an' I've larnt patience; but you, Terence, you'd raise hand on Judy an' kill her in a year. Never mind if Dinah gives you the go; you've desarved ut. Never mind if the whole reg'mint laughs at you all day. Get shut av Judy an' her mother. They can't dhrag you to church, but if they do, they'll dhrag you to hell. Go back to your quarthers an' lie down,' sez he. Thin, over his shoulder, 'You *must* ha' done with thim.'

"Nixt day I wint to see Dinah; but there was no tucker in me as I walked. I knew

the throuble wud come soon enough widout any handlin' av mine, an' I dreaded ut sore.

"I heard Judy callin' me, but I hild straight on to the Shadds' quarthers, an' Dinah wud ha' kissed me, but I hild her back.

"'Whin all's said, darlin',' sez I, 'you can give ut me if you will, tho' I misdoubt 'twill be so easy to come by thin.'

"I had scarce begun to put the explanation into shape before Judy an' her mother came to the door. I think there was a veranda, but I'm forgettin'.

"'Will ye not step in?' sez Dinah, pretty and polite, though the Shadds had do dealin's with the Sheehys. Ould Mother Shadd looked up quick, an' she was the fust to see the throuble, for Dinah was her daughter.

"'I 'm pressed for time to-day,' sez Judy, as bould as brass; 'an I've only come for Terence—my promust man. 'Tis strange to find him here the day afther the day.'

"Dinah looked at me as though I had hit her, an' I answered straight:

"'There was some nonsinse last night at the Sheehys' quarthers, an' Judy's carryin' on the joke, darlin',' sez I.

"'At the Sheehys' quarthers?' sez Dinah, very slow; an' Judy cut in wid:

"'He was there from nine till tin, Dinah Shadd, an' the betther half av that time I was sittin' on his knee, Dinah Shadd. Ye

may look an' ye may look an' ye may look me up an' down, but ye won't look away that Terence is my promust man. Terence, darlin', 'tis time for us to be comin' home.'

"Dinah Shadd never said word to Judy. 'Ye left me at half-past eight,' sez she to me,' an' I never thought that ye'd leave me for Judy, promises or no promises. Go back wid her, you that have to be fetched by a girl! I'm done with you,' sez she; and she ran into her own room, her mother follow'in'. So I was alone with those two women, and at liberty to spake me sintiments.

"'Judy Sheehy,' sez I, 'if you made a fool av me betune the lights, you shall not do ut in the day. I never promised you words or lines.'

"'You lie!' sez ould Mother Sheehy; 'an' may ut choke you where you stand!' She was far gone in dhrink.

"'An' tho' ut choked me where I stud I'd not change,' sez I. 'Go home, Judy. I take shame for a decent girl like you dhraggin' your mother out bareheaded on this errand. Hear, now, and have ut for an answer. I gave me word to Dinah Shadd yesterday, an, more blame to me I was with you last night talkin' nonsinse, but nothin' more You've chosen to thry to hould me on ut. I will not be held thereby for anythin' in the world. Is that enough?'

"Judy wint pink all over. 'An' I wish

you joy av the perjury,' sez she. You've lost a woman that would ha' wore her hand to the bone for your pleasure; an' 'deed, Terence, ye were not thrapped.' . . . Lascelles must ha' spoken plain to her. 'I am such as Dinah is—'deed I am! Ye've lost a fool av a girl that'll never look at you again, an' ye've lost what ye niver had—your common honesty. If you manage your men as you manage your love-makin', small wondher they call you the worst corp'ril in the comp'ny. Come away, mother,' sez she.

"But divil a fut would the ould woman budge! 'D'you hould by that?' sez she, peerin' up under her thick gray eyebrows.

"'Ay, an' wud,' said I, 'tho' Dinah gave me the go twinty times. I'll hav no thruck with you or yours,' sez I. 'Take your child away, ye shameless woman!'

"'An' am I shameless?' sez she, bringin' her hands up above her head. 'Thin what are you, ye lyin', schamin', weak-kneed, dhirty-souled son of a sutler? Am *I* shameless? Who put the open shame on me an' my child that we shud go beggin' through the lines in daylight for the broken word of a man? Double portion of my shame be on you, Terence Mulvaney, that think yourself so strong! By Mary and the saints, by blood and water, an' by ivry sorrow that came into the world since the beginnin', the black blight fall on you and yours, so that

you may niver be free from pain for another when ut's not your own! May your heart bleed in your breast drop by drop wid all your friends laughin' at the bleedin'! Strong you think yourself? May your strength be a curse to you to dhrive you into the devil's hands against your own will! Clear-eyed you are? May your eyes see clear ivry step av the dark path you take till the hot cinders av hell put thim out! May the ragin' dry thirst in my own ould bones go to you, that you shall never pass bottle full nor glass empty! God preserve the light av your understandin' to you, my jewel av a bhoy, that ye may niver forget what you mint to be an' do when you're wallowin' in the muck! May ye see the betther and follow the worse as long as there's breath in your body, an' may ye die quick in a strange land, watchin' your death before ut takes you, an' onable to stir hand or fut!'

"I heard a scufflin' in the room behind, and thin Dinah Shadd's hand dhropped into mine like a roseleaf into a muddy road.

"The half av that I'll take,' sez she, 'an' more too, if I can. Go home, ye silly-talkin' woman—go home an' confess.'

"'Come away! Come away!' sez Judy, pullin' her mother by the shawl. 'Twas none av Terence's fault. For the love av Mary, stop the talkin'!'

"'An' you!' said ould Mother Sheehy, spinnin' round forninst Dinah. 'Will ye

take the half av that man's load? Stand off from him, Dinah Shadd, before he takes you down too—you that look to be a quarthermaster sergint's wife in five years. Ye look too high, child. Ye shall wash for the quarthermaster-sergint, whin he pl'ases to give you the job out av charity; but a privit's wife ye shall be to the end, an' ivry sorrow of a privit's wife ye shall know, an' niver a joy but wan, that shall go from you like the tide from a rock. The pain of bearin' ye shall know, but niver the pleasure of givin' the breast; an' you shall put away a man-child into the common ground wid niver a priest to say a prayer over him, an' on that man-child ye shall think ivry day av your life. Think long, Dinah Shadd, for you'll niver have another tho' you pray till your knees are bleedin'. The mothers av children shall mock you behind your back whin you're wringin' over the wash-tub. You shall know what ut is to take a dhrunken husband home an' see him go to the gyard-room. Will that plase you, Dinah Shadd, that won't be seen talkin' to my daughter? You shall talk to worse than Judy before all's over. The sergint's wives shall look down on you, contemptuous daughter av a sergint, an' you shall cover ut all up wid a smilin' face whin your heart's burstin'. Stand off him, Dinah Shadd, for I've put the Black Curse of Shielygh upon him, an' his own mouth shall make ut good.'

"She pitched forward on her head an' began foamin' at the mouth. Dinah Shadd ran out with water, an' Judy dhragged the ould woman into the veranda till she sat up.

"'I'm old an' forlorn,' she sez, tremblin' an' cryin', 'an' 'tis like I say a dale more than I mane.'

"'When you're able to walk—go,' says ould Mother Shadd. 'This house has no place for the likes av you, that have cursed my daughter.'

"'Eyah!' said the ould woman. 'Hard words break no bones, an' Dinah Shadd'll kape the love av her husband till my bones are green corn. Judy, darlin', I misremember what I came here for. Can you lend us the bottom av a taycup av tay, Mrs. Shadd?"

"But Judy dhragged her off, cryin' as tho' her heart wud break. An' Dinah Shadd an' I, in ten minutes we had forgot ut all."

"Then why do you remember it now?" said I.

"Is ut like I'd forgit? Ivry word that wicked ould woman spoke fell thrue in my life aftherwards; an' I cud ha' stud ut all—stud ut all, except fwhen little Shadd was born. That was on the line av march three months afther the regiment was taken wid cholera. We were betune Umballa an' Kalka thin, an' I was on picket. When I

came off, the women showed me the child, an' ut turned on uts side an' died as I looked. We buried him by the road, an' Father Victory was a day's march behind wid the heavy baggage, so the comp'ny captain read prayer. An' since then I've been a childless man an' all else that ould Mother Sheehy put upon me an' Dinah Shadd. What do you think, sorr?"

I thought a good deal, but it seemed better then to reach out for Mulvaney's hand. This demonstration nearly cost me the use of three fingers. Whatever he knows of his weaknesses, Mulvaney is entirely ignorant of his strength.

"But what do you think?" he insisted, as I was straightening out the crushed member.

My reply was drowned in yells and outcries from the next fire, where ten men were shouting for "Orth'ris!" "Privit Orth'ris!" "Mistah Or-ther-is!" "Deah Boy!" "Cap'n Orth'ris!" "Field-Marshal Orth'ris!" "Stanley, you pen-n'orth o' pop, come 'ere to your own comp'ny!" And the Cockney, who had been delighting another audience with recondite and Rabelaisian yarns, was shot down among his admirers by the major force.

"You've crumpled my dress-shirt 'orrid," said he; "an' I sha'n't sing no more to this 'ere bloomin' drawin'-room."

Learoyd, roused by the confusion, uncoiled

himself, crept behind Ortheris, and raised him aloft on his shoulders.

"Sing, ye bloomin' hummin'-bird!" said he; and Ortheris, beating time on Learoyd's skull, delivered himself, in the raucous voice of the Ratcliffe Highway, of the following chaste and touching ditty:

"My girl she give me the go oncet,
When I was a London lad,
An'I went on the drunk for a fortnight,
An' then I went to the bad.
The queen she gave me a shillin',
To fight for 'er over the seas;
But guv'ment built me a fever-trap,
An Injia gave me disease.

Chorus.—Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,
An' don't you go for the beer;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

"I fired a shot at an Afghan;
The beggar 'e fired again;
An' I lay on my bed with a 'ole in my 'ead,
An' missed the next campaign!
I up with my gun at a Burman
Who carried a bloomin' *dah*,
But the cartridge stuck, an' the bay'nit bruk,
An' all I got was the scar.

Chorus.—Ho! don't you aim at a Afghan
When you stand on the sky-line clear;
An' don't you go for a Burman
If none o' your friends is near.

"I served my time for a corp'ral,
An' wetted my stripes with pop,
For I went on the bend with an intimate friend,
An' finished the night in the shop.

I served my time for a sergeant;
The colonel 'e sez 'No!
The most you'll be is a full C. B,' *
An'—very next night 'twas so.

Chorus.—Ho! don't you go for a corp'ral,
Unless your 'ead is clear;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

"I've tasted the luck o' the army
In barrack an' camp an' clink,
An' I lost my tip through the bloomin' trip
Along o' the women an' drink
I'm down at the heel o' my service,
An' when I am laid on the shelf,
My very wust friend from beginning to end,
By the blood of a mouse, was myself.

Chorus.—Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,
An don't you go for the beer;
But I was an ass when I was at grass,
An' that is why I'm 'ere."

"Ay, listen to our little man now, singin' and shoutin' as tho' trouble had never touched him! D'ye remember when he went mad with the homesickness?" said Mulvaney, recalling a never-to-be-forgotten season when Ortheris waded through the deep waters of affliction and behaved abominably. "But he's talkin' the bitter truth, tho'. Eyah!

'My very worst friend from beginning to end,
By the blood of a mouse, was mesilf.'

Hark out!" he continued, jumping to his feet. "What did I tell you, sorr?"

* Confined to barracks.

Fttl ! sptl ! whttl ! went the rifles of the picket in the darkness, and we heard their feet rushing toward us as Ortheris tumbled past me and into his great-coat. It is an impressive thing, even in peace, to see an armed camp spring to life with clatter of accouterments, click of Martini levers, and blood-curdling speculations as to the fate of missing boots. "Pickets dhriven in," said Mulvaney, staring like a buck at bay into the soft, clinging gloom. "Stand by an' kape close to us. If 'tis cav'lry, they may blundher into the fires."

Tr—ra ra ! ta—ra—la ! sung the thrice-blessed bugle, and the rush to form square began. There is much rest and peace in the heart of a square if you arrive in time and are not trodden upon too frequently. The smell of leather belts, fatigue uniform, and unpacked humanity is comforting.

A dull grumble, that seemed to come from every point of the compass at once, struck our listening ears, and little thrills of excitement ran down the faces of the square. Those who write so learnedly about judging distances by sound should hear cavalry on the move at night. A high-pitched yell on the left told us that the disturbers were friends—the cavalry of the attack, who had missed their direction in the darkness, and were feeling blindly for some sort of support and camping-ground. The difficulty explained, they jingled on.

"Double pickets out there; by your arms lie down and sleep the rest," said the major, and the square melted away as the men scrambled for their places by the fires.

When I woke I saw Mulvaney, the night-dew gemming his mustache, leaning on his rifle at picket, lonely as Prometheus on his rock, with I know not what vulture tearing his liver.

A CONFERENCE OF THE POWERS.

"Life liveth best in life, and doth not roam
To other realms if all be well at home,
'Solid as ocean foam,' quoth ocean foam."

THE room was blue with the smoke of three pipes and a cigar. The leave season had opened in India, and the first-fruits on the English side of the water were "Tick" Boileau, of the Forty-fifth Bengal Cavalry, who called on me after three years' absence to discuss old things which had happened. Fate, who always does her work handsomely, sent up the same staircase within the same hour the Infant, fresh from Upper Burmah, and he and Boileau, looking out of my window, saw walking in the street one Nevin, late in a Ghoorkha regiment and the Black Mountain expedition. They yelled to him to come up, and the whole street was aware that they desired him to come up; and he came up, and there followed pandemonium, because we had foregathered from the ends of the earth, and three of us were on a holiday, and none of us was twenty-five, and all the delights of all London lay waiting our pleasure.

Boileau took the only other chair ; and the Infant, by right of his bulk, the sofa ; and Nevin, being a little man, sat cross-legged on the top of the revolving bookcase ; and we all said : "Who'd ha' thought it?" and "What are *you* doing here?" till speculation was exhausted, and the talk went over to inevitable "shop." Boileau was full of a great scheme for securing military attachéship at St. Petersburg ; Nevin had hopes of the Staff College ; and the Infant had been moving heaven and earth and the Horse Guards for a commission in the Egyptian army.

"What's the use o' that?" said Nevin, twirling round on the bookcase.

"Oh, heaps ! Course if you get stuck with a Fellaheen regiment, you're sold ; but if you are appointed to a Soudanese lot, you're in clover. They are first-class fighting men, and just think of the eligible, central position of Egypt in the next row !"

This was putting the match to a magazine. We all began to explain the Central-Asian question off-hand, flinging army corps from the Helmund to Cashmir with more than Russian recklessness. Each of the boys made for himself a war to his own liking, and when we had settled all the details of Armageddon, killed all our senior officers, handled a division apiece, and nearly torn the atlas in two in attempts to explain our theories, Boileau needs must

lift up his voice above the clamor and cry: "Anyhow, it'll be the —— of a row!" in tones that carried conviction far down the staircase.

Entered unperceived in the smoke William the Silent. "Gen'elman to see you, sir," said he, and disappeared, leaving in his stead none other than Mr. Eustace Cleever. William would have introduced the dragon of Wantley with equal disregard of present company.

"I—I beg your pardon! I didn't know that there was anybody—with you. I—"

But it was not seemly to allow Mr. Cleever to depart, for he was a great man. The boys remained where they were, because any movement would block the little room. Only when they saw his gray hairs they stood up on their feet, and when the Infant caught the name, he said: "Are you —did you write that book called 'As it was in the Beginning'?"

Mr. Cleever admitted that he had written the book.

"Then—then I don't know how to thank you, sir," said the Infant, flushing pink. "I was brought up in the country you wrote about. All my people live there, and I read the book in camp out in Burmah on the Hlinedatalone, and I knew every stick and stone, and the dialect, too; and, by Jove! it was just like being at home and hearing the country people talk. Nevin,

you know 'As it was in the Beginning'? So does Ti—Boileau."

Mr. Cleever has tasted as much praise, public and private, as one man may safely swallow, but it seemed to me that the outspoken admiration in the Infant's eyes and the little stir in the little company came home to him very nearly indeed.

"Won't you take the sofa?" said the Infant. "I'll sit on Boileau's chair, and—" Here he looked at me to spur me to my duties as a host, but I was watching the novelist's face. Cleever had not the least intention of going away, but settled himself on the sofa. Following the first great law of the army, which says: "All property is common except money, and you've only got to ask the next man for that," the Infant offered tobacco and drink. It was the least he could do, but not four columns of the finest review in the world held half as much appreciation and reverence as the Infant's simple: "Say when, sir," above the long glass.

Cleever said "when," and more thereto, for he was a golden talker, and he sat in the midst of hero-worship devoid of all taint of self-interest. The boys asked him of the birth of his book, and whether it was hard to write, and how his notions came to him, and he answered with the same absolute simplicity, as he was questioned. His big eyes twinkled, he dug his long, thin hands

into his gray beard, and tugged it as he grew animated and dropped little by little from the peculiar pinching of the broader vowels—the indefinable "euh" that runs through the speech of the pundit caste—and the elaborate choice of words to freely mouthed ows and ois, and for him, at least, unfettered colloquialisms. He could not altogether understand the boys who hung upon his words so reverently. The line of the chin-strap that still showed white and untanned on cheek-bone and jaw, the steadfast young eyes puckered at the corners of the lids with much staring through red-hot sunshine, the deep, troubled breathing, and the curious crisp, curt speech seemed to puzzle him equally. He could create men and women, and send them to the uttermost ends of the earth to help, delight, and comfort; he knew every mood of the fields, and could interpret them to the cities, and he knew the hearts of many in the city and country, but he had hardly in forty years come into contact with the thing which is called a Subaltern of the Line. He told the boys this.

"Well, how should you?" said the Infant.

"You—you're quite different, y' see, sir."

The Infant expressed his ideas in his tone rather than his words, and Cleever understood the compliments.

"We're only subs," said Nevin, "and we aren't exactly the sort of men you'd meet much in your life, I s'pose."

"That's true," said Cleever. "I live chiefly among those who write and paint and sculp and so forth. We have our own talk and our own interests, and the outer world doesn't trouble us much."

"That must be awf'ly jolly," said Boileau, at a venture. "We have our own shop too, but 'tisn't half as interesting as yours, of course. You know all the men who've ever done anything, and we only knock about from place to place, and we do nothing."

"The army's a very lazy profession, if you choose to make it so," said Nevin. "When there's nothing going on, there *is* nothing going on, and you lie up."

"Or try to get a billet somewhere so as to be ready for the next show," said the Infant, with a chuckle.

"To me," said Cleever, softly, "the whole idea of warfare seems so foreign and unnatural—so essentially vulgar, if I may say so—that I can hardly appreciate your sensations. Of course, though, any change from idling in garrison towns must be a godsend to you."

Like not a few home-staying Englishmen, Cleever believed that the newspaper phrase he quoted covered the whole duty of the army, whose toil enabled him to enjoy his many-sided life in peace. The remark was not a happy one, for Boileau had just come off the Indian frontier, the Infant had been on the war-path for nearly eighteen months,

and the little red man, Nevin, two months before had been sleeping under the stars at the peril of his life. But none of them tried to explain till I ventured to point out that they had all seen service, and were not used to idling. Cleever took in the idea slowly.

"Seen service?" said he. Then, as a child might ask, "Tell me—tell me everything about everything."

"How do you mean, sir?" said the Infant, delighted at being directly appealed to by the great man.

"Good heavens! how am I to make you understand if you can't see? In the first place, what is your age?"

"Twenty-three next July," said the Infant, promptly.

Cleever questioned the others with his eyes.

"I'm twenty-four," said Nevin.

"I'm twenty-two," said Boileau.

And you've all seen service?"

"We've all knocked about a little bit, sir, but the Infant's the war-worn veteran. He's had two years' work in Upper Burmah," said Nevin.

"When you say work, what do you mean, you extraordinary creatures?"

"Explain it, Infant," said Nevin.

"Oh, keeping things in order generally, and running about after little *dakus*—that's Dacoits—and so on. There's nothing to explain."

"Make that young leviathan speak," said Cleever, impatiently.

"How can he speak?" said I. "He's done the work. The two don't go together. But. Infant, you are requested to *bukh*."

"What about? I'll try."

"*Bukh* about a *daur*. You've been on heaps of 'em," said Nevin.

"What in the world does that mean? Has the army a language of its own?"

The Infant turned very red. He was afraid he was being laughed at, and he detested talking before outsiders; but it was the author of "As it was in the Beginning" who waited.

"It's all so new to me," pleaded Cleever. "And—and you said you liked my book."

This was a direct appeal that the Infant could understand. He began, rather flurriedly, with "Pull me up, sir, if I say anything you don't follow. 'Bout six months before I took my leave out of Burmah I was on the Hlinedatalone up near the Shan states with sixty Tommies—private soldiers, that is—and another subaltern, a year senior to me. The Burmese business was a subaltern war, and our forces were split up into little detachments, all running about the country and trying to keep the Dacotis quiet. The Dacoits were having a first-class time, y' know—filling women up with kerosene and setting 'em alight, and burning villages, and crucifying people."

The wonder in Eustace Cleever's eyes deepened. He disbelieved wholly in a book which describes crucifixion at length, and he could not quite realize that the custom still existed.

"Have you ever seen a crucifixion?" said he.

"Of course not. Shouldn't have allowed it if I had. But I've seen the corpses. The Dacoits had a nice trick of sending a crucified corpse down the river on a raft, just to show they were keeping their tail up and enjoying themselves. Well, that was the kind of people I had to deal with."

"Alone?" said Cleever. Solitude of the soul he knew—none better; but he had never been ten miles away from his fellowmen in his life.

"I had my men, but the rest of it was pretty much alone. The nearest military post that could give me orders was fifteen miles away, and we used to heliograph to them, and they used to give us orders same way. Too many orders."

"Who was your C. O.?" said Boileau.

"Bounderby. Major. *Pukka* Bounderby. More Bounder than *pukka*. He went out up Bhamo way. Shot or cut down last year," said the Infant.

"What mean these interludes in a strange tongue?" said Cleever to me.

"Professional information, like the Mississippi pilots' talk. He did not approve of

his major, who has since died a violent death," said I. "Go on, Infant."

"Far too many orders. You couldn't take the Tommies out for a two-days' daur—that means expedition, sir—without being blown up for not asking leave. And the whole country was humming with Dacoits. I used to send out spies and act on their information. As soon as a man came in and told me of a gang in hiding, I'd take thirty men, with some grub, and go out and look for them, while the other subaltern lay doggo in camp."

"Lay? Pardon me, but how did he lie?" said Cleever.

"Lay doggo. Lay quiet with the other thirty men. When I came back, he'd take out his half of the command, and have a good time of his own."

"Who was he?" said Boileau.

"Carter-Deecy, of the Aurangabadis. Good chap, but too *zubberdusty* and went *bokhar* four days out of seven. He's gone out too. Don't interrupt a man."

Cleever looked helplessly at me.

"The other subaltern," I translate, swiftly, "came from a native regiment and was overbearing in his demeanor. He suffered much from the fever of the country, and is now dead. Go on, Infant."

"After a bit we got into trouble for using the men on frivolous occasions, and so I used to put my signaler under arrest to pre-

vent him reading the helio orders. Then I'd go out and leave a message to be sent an hour after I got clear of the camp ; something like this : 'Received important information ; start in an hour, unless countermanded.' If I was ordered back, it didn't much matter. I swore that the C. O.'s watch was wrong, or something, when I came back. The Tommies enjoyed the fun, and—oh, yes—there was one Tommy who was the bard of the detachment. He used to make up verses on everything that happened."

"What sort of verses ? " said Cleever.

"Lovely verses ; and the Tommies used to sing 'em. There was one song with a chorus, and it said something like this." The Infant dropped into the barrack-room twang :

" 'Theebau, the Burmah king, did a very foolish thing
When 'e mustered 'ostile forces in ar-rai.
'E littul thought that we, from far across the sea,
Would send our armies up to Mandalai ! "

"Oh, gorgeous ! " said Cleever. "And how magnificently direct ! The notion of a regimental bard is new to me. It's epic."

"He was awf'ly popular with the men," said the Infant. "He had them all down in rhyme as soon as ever they had done anything. He was a great bard. He was always on time with a eulogy when we picked up a Boh—that's a leader of Dacoits."

"How did you pick him up ? " said Cleever.

"Oh, shot him if he wouldn't surrender."

"You! Have you shot a man?"

There was a subdued chuckle from all three, and it dawned on the questioner that one experience in life which was denied to himself—and he weighed the souls of men in a balance—had been shared by three very young gentlemen of engaging appearance. He turned round on Nevin, who had climbed to the top of the bookcase and was sitting cross-legged as before.

"And have *you*, too?"

"Think so," said Nevin, sweetly. "In the Black Mountain, sir. He was rolling cliffs on to my half-company and spoiling our formation. I took a rifle from a man and brought him down at the second shot."

"Good heavens! And how did you feel afterward?"

"Thirsty. I wanted a smoke, too."

Cleever looked at Boileau, the youngest. Surely his hands were guiltless of blood. Boileau shook his head and laughed. "Go on, Infant," said he.

"And you, too?" said Cleever.

"Fancy so. It was a case of cut—cut or be cut—with me, so I cut at one. I couldn't do any more, sir," said Boileau.

Cleever looked as though he would like to ask many questions, but the Infant swept on in the full tide of his tale.

"Well, we were called insubordinate young whelps at last, and strictly forbidden

to take the Tommies out any more without orders. I wasn't sorry, because Tommy is such an exacting sort of creature, though he works beautifully. He wants to live as though he were in barracks all the time. I was grubbing on fowls and boiled corn, but the Tommies wanted their pound of fresh meat, and their half ounce of this, and their two ounces of t'other thing, and they used to come to me and badger me for plug tobacco when we were four days in jungle! I said: 'I can get you Burmah tobacco, but I don't keep a canteen up my sleeve.' They couldn't see it. They wanted all the luxuries of the season, confound 'em!"

"You were alone when you were dealing with these men?" said Cleever, watching the Infant's face under the palm of his hand. He was receiving new ideas, and they seemed to trouble him.

"Of course. Unless you count the mosquitoes. They were nearly as big as the men. After I had to lie doggo I began to look for something to do, and I was great pals with a man called Hicksey, in the Burmah police—the best man that ever stepped on earth; a first-class man."

Cleever nodded applause. He knew something of enthusiasm.

"Hicksey and I were as thick as thieves. He had some Burmah mounted police—nippy little chaps, armed with sword and Snider carbine. They rode punchy Burmah

ponies, with string stirrups, red cloth saddles, and red bell-rope headstalls. Hicksey used to lend me six or eight of them when I asked him—nippy little devils, keen as mustard. But they told their wives too much, and all my plans got known, till I learned to give false marching orders overnight, and take the men to quite a different village in the morning. Then we used to catch the simple *dakus* before breakfast, and make them very sick. It's a ghastly country on the Hlinedatalone; all bamboo jungle, with paths about four feet wide winding through it. The *dakus* knew all the paths, and used to pot at us as we came round a corner; but the mounted police knew the paths as well as the *dakus*, and we used to go stalking 'em in and out among the paths. Once we flushed 'em—the men on the ponies had the pull of the man on foot. We held all the country absolutely quiet for ten miles round in about a month. Then we took Boh Naghee—Hicksey and I and the civil officer. That was a lark!"

"I think I am beginning to understand a little," said Cleever. "It was a pleasure to you to administer and fight, and so on."

"Rather. There's nothing nicer than a satisfactory little expedition, when you find all your plans fit together and your conformations *teek*—correct, you know—and the whole *subchiz*—I mean when everything works out like formulæ on a blackboard.

Hicksey had all the information about the Boh. He had been burning villages and murdering people right and left, and cutting up government convoys, and all that. He was lying doggo in a village about fifteen miles off, waiting to get a fresh gang together. So we arranged to take thirty mounted police, and turn him out before he could plunder into the newly settled villages. At the last minute the civil officer in our part of the world thought he'd assist in the performance."

"Who was he?" said Nevin.

"His name was Dennis," said the Infant, slowly; "and we'll let it stay so. He's a better man now than he was then."

"But how old was the civil power?" said Cleever. "The situation is developing itself." Then, in his beard: "Who are you, to judge men?"

"He was about six-and-twenty," said the Infant; "and he was awf'ly clever. He knew a lot of literary things, but I don't think he was quite steady enough for Dacoit-hunting. We started overnight for Boh Na-ghee's village, and we got there just before the morning, without raising an alarm. Dennis had turned out armed to the teeth—two revolvers, a carbine, and all sorts of things. I was talking to Hicksey about posting our men, and Dennis edged his pony in between us, and said: 'What shall I do? What shall I do? Tell me

what to do, you fellows.' We didn't take much notice, but his pony tried to bite me in the leg, and I said: 'Pull out a bit, old man, till we've settled the attack.' He kept edging in, and fiddling with his reins and the revolvers, and saying: 'Dear me! dear me! Oh, dear me! What do you think I'd better do?' The man was in a blue funk and his teeth were chattering."

"I sympathize with the civil power," said Cleever. "Continue, young Clive."

"The fun of it was that he was supposed to be our superior officer. Hicksey took a good look at him, and told him to attach himself to my party. Beastly mean of Hicksey, that. The chap kept on edging in and bothering, instead of asking for some men and taking up his own position, till I got angry. The carbines began popping on the other side of the village. Then I said: 'For God's sake, be quiet, and sit down where you are! If you see anybody come out of the village, shoot at him.' I knew he couldn't hit a hayrick at a yard. Then I took my men over the garden wall —over the palisades, y' know—somehow or other, and the fun began. Hicksey had found the Boh in bed under a mosquito curtain, and he had taken a flying jump on to him."

"A flying jump?" said Cleever. "Is that also war?"

"Yes," said the Infant, now thoroughly

warmed. "Don't you know how you take a flying jump on to a fellow's head at school when he snores in the dormitory? The Boh was sleeping in a regular bedful of swords and pistols, and Hicksey came down *à la* Zazel through the netting, and the net got mixed up with the pistols and the Boh and Hicksey, and they all rolled on the floor together. I laughed till I couldn't stand, and Hicksey was cursing me for not helping him, so I left him to fight it out, and went into the village. Our men were slashing about and firing, and so were the Dacoits, and in the thick of the mess some ass set fire to a house, and we all had to clear out. I froze on to the nearest *daku* and ran to the palisade, shoving him in front of me. He wriggled clear and bounded over to the other side. I came after him, but when I had one leg one side and one leg the other of the palisade, I saw that my friend had fallen flat on Dennis's head. That man had never moved from where I left him. The two rolled on the ground together, and Dennis's carbine went off and nearly shot me. The *daku* picked himself up and ran, and Dennis heaved his carbine after him, and it caught him on the back of his head and knocked him silly. You never saw anything so funny in your life. I doubled up on the top of the palisade and hung there, yelling with laughter. But Dennis began

to weep like anything. 'Oh, I've killed a man!' he said—'I've killed a man, and I shall never know another peaceful hour in my life! Is he dead? Oh, *is* he dead? Good God! I've killed a man!' I came down and said: 'Don't be a fool!' But he kept on shouting 'Is he dead?' till I could have kicked him. The *daku* was only knocked out of time with the carbine. He came to after a bit, and I said: 'Are you hurt much?' He grinned and said no. His chest was all cut with scrambling over the palisade. 'The white man's gun didn't do that,' he said. 'I did that myself, and I knocked the white man over.' Just like a Burman, wasn't it? Dennis wouldn't be happy at any price. He said: 'Tie up his wounds. He'll bleed to death. Oh, my God, he'll bleed to death!' 'Tie 'em up yourself,' I said, 'if you're so anxious.' 'I can't touch him,' said Dennis, 'but here's my shirt.' He took off his shirt, and he fixed his braces again over his bare shoulders. I ripped the shirt up and bandaged the Dacoit quite professionally. He was grinning at Dennis all the time; and Dennis's haversack was lying on the ground, bursting full of sandwiches. Greedy hog! I took some and offered some to Dennis. 'How can I eat?' he said. 'How can you ask me to eat? His very blood is on your hands, oh, God! and you're eating *my* sandwiches!' 'All right,' I said. 'I'll give 'em

to the *daku.*' So I did, and the little chap was quite pleased, and wolfed 'em down like one o'clock."

Cleever brought his hand down on the tablecloth a thump that made the empty glasses dance. "That's art," he said. "Flat, flagrant mechanism. Don't tell me that happened on the spot!"

The pupils of the Infant's eyes contracted to pin points. "I beg your pardon," he said slowly and a little stiffly, "but I am telling this thing as it happened."

Cleever looked at him for a moment. "My fault entirely," said he. "I should have known. Please go on."

"Oh, then Hicksey came out of what was left of the village with his prisoners and captives all neatly tied up. Boh Na-ghee was first, and one of the villagers, as soon as he saw the old ruffian helpless, began kicking him quietly. The Boh stood it as long as he could, and then groaned, and we saw what was going on. Hicksey tied the villager up and gave him half a dozen good ones to remind him to leave a prisoner alone. You should have seen the old Boh grin. Oh, but Hicksey was in a furious rage with everybody. He'd got a wipe over the elbow that had tickled up his funny-bone, and he was simply rabid with me for not having helped him with the Boh and the mosquito net. I had to explain that I couldn't do anything. If you'd seen 'em

both tangled up together on the floor, like a blaspheming cocoon, you'd have laughed for a week. Hicksey swore that the only decent man of his acquaintance was the Boh, and all the way back to camp Hicksey was talking to him, and the Boh was grumbling about the soreness of his bones. When we got home and had had a bath, the Boh wanted to know when he was going to be hanged. Hicksey said he couldn't oblige him on the spot, but had to send him to Rangoon. The Boh went down on his knees and reeled off a catalogue of his crimes—he ought to have been hanged seventeen times over by his own confession—and implored Hicksey to settle the business out of hand. 'If I'm sent to Rangoon,' said he, 'they'll keep me in jail all my life, and that is a death every time the sun gets up or the wind blows.' But we had to send him to Rangoon; and, of course, he was let off down there and given penal servitude for life. When I came to Rangoon I went over the jail—I had helped to fill it, y' know—and the old Boh was there and recognized me at once. He begged for some opium first, and I tried to get him some; but that was against the rules. Then he asked me to have his sentence changed to death, because he was afraid of being sent to the Andamans. I couldn't do that, either; but I tried to cheer him, and told him how the row was going up country. And the last

thing he said was: 'Give my compliments to the fat white man who jumped on me. If I'd been awake I'd have killed him.' I wrote that to Hicksey next mail, and—and that's all. I'm 'fraid I've been gassing awf'ly, sir."

Cleever said nothing for a long time. The Infant looked uncomfortable. He feared that, misled by enthusiasm, he had filled up the novelist's time with unprofitable recital of trivial anecdotes.

Then said Cleever: "I can't understand it. Why should *you* have seen and done all these things before you have cut your wisdom-teeth?"

"Don't know," said the Infant, apologetically. "I haven't seen much—only Burmese jungle."

"And dead men and war and power and responsibility," said Cleever, under his breath. "You won't have any sensations left at thirty if you go on as you have done. But I want to hear more tales—more tales." He seemed to forget that even subalterns might have engagements of their own.

"We're thinking of dining out somewhere, the lot of us, and going on to the Empire afterward," said Nevin, with hesitation. He did not like to ask Cleever to come too. The invitation might be regarded as "cheek." And Cleever, anxious not to wag a gray beard unbidden among boys at large, said nothing on his side.

Boileau solved the little difficulty by blurting out: "Won't you come too, sir?"

Cleever almost shouted "Yes," and while he was being helped into his coat, continued to murmur "Good heavens!" at intervals in a manner that the boys could not understand.

"I don't think I've been to the Empire in my life," said he. "But, good heavens! what *is* my life, after all? Let us go back."

So they went out with Eustace Cleever, and I sulked at home, because the boys had come to see me, but had gone over to the better man, which was humiliating. They packed him into a cab with utmost reverence, for was he not the author of "As it was in the Beginning," and a person in whose company it was an honor to go abroad? From all I gathered later, he had taken no less interest in the performance before him than in the boys' conversation, and they protested with emphasis that he was "as good a man as they make, knew what a man was driving at almost before he said it, and yet he's so dashed simple about things any man knows." That was one of many comments made afterward.

At midnight they returned, announcing that they were highly respectable gondoliers, and that oysters and stout were what they chiefly needed. The eminent novelist was still with them, and I think he was calling them by their shorter names. I am certain

that he said he had been moving in worlds not realized, and that they had shown him the Empire in a new light. Still sore at recent neglect, I answered shortly : " Thank Heaven, we have within the land ten thousand as good as they ! " and when Cleever departed, asked him what he thought of things generally.

He replied with another quotation, to the effect that though singing was a remarkably fine performance, I was to be quite sure that few lips would be moved to song if they could find a sufficiency of kissing.

Whereat I understood that Eustace Cleever, decorator and color man in words, was blaspheming his own art, and that he would be sorry for this in the morning.

AMONG THE RAILWAY FOLK

CHAPTER I.

A RAILWAY SETTLEMENT.

JAMALPUR is the headquarters of the East India Railway. This in itself is not a startling statement. The wonder begins with the exploration of Jamalpur, which is a station entirely made by, and devoted to, the use of those untiring servants of the public, the railway folk. They have towns of their own at Toondla and Assensole; a sun-dried sanitarium at Bandikui; and Howrah, Ajmir, Allahabad, Lahore, and Pindi know their colonies. But Jamalpur is unadulteratedly "Railway," and he who has nothing to do with the E. I. Railway in some shape or another feels a stranger and an interloper. Running always east and southerly, the train carries him from the torments of the northwest into the wet, woolly warmth of Bengal, where may be found the hothouse heat that has ruined the temper of the good people of Calcutta. The land is fat and greasy with good living, and the wealth of the bodies of

innumerable dead things; and here—just above Mokameh—may be seen fields stretching, without stick, stone, or bush to break the view, from the railway line to the horizon.

Up-country innocents must look at the map to learn that Jamalpur is near the top left-hand corner of the big loop that the E. I. R. throws out round Bhagalpur and part of the Bara-Banki districts. Northward of Jamalpur, as near as may be, lies the Ganges and Tirhoot, and eastward an offshoot of the volcanic Rajmehal range blocks the view.

A station which has neither Judge, Commissioner, Deputy, or 'Stunt, which is devoid of law courts, *ticcagharies*, District Superintendents of Police, and many other evidences of an over-cultured civilization, is a curiosity. "We administer ourselves," says Jamalpur, proudly, "or we did—till we had local self-government in—and now the racket-marker administers us." This is a solemn fact. The station, which had its beginnings thirty odd years ago, used, till comparatively recent times, to control its own roads, sewage, conservancy, and the like. But, with the introduction of local self-government, it was ordained that the "inestimable boon" should be extended to a place made by, and maintained for, Europeans, and a brand-new municipality was created and nominated according to the many rules of the game. In the skirmish that ensued, the Club racket-marker fought his way to the front, secured a place on a

board largely composed of Babus, and since that day Jamalpur's views on government have not been fit for publication. To understand the magnitude of the insult, one must study the city—for station, in the strict sense of the word, it is not. Crotons, palms, mangoes, *mellingtonias*, teak, and bamboos adorn it, and the *poinsettia* and *bougainvillea*, the railway creeper and the *bignonia venusta*, make it gay with many colors. It is laid out with military precision to each house its just share of garden, its red brick path, its growth of trees, and its neat little wicket gate. Its general aspect, in spite of the Dutch formality, is that of an English village, such a thing as enterprising stage-managers put on the theaters at home. The hills have thrown a protecting arm round nearly three sides of it, and on the fourth it is bounded by what are locally known as the "sheds"; in other words, the station, offices, and workshops of the company. The E. I. R. only exists for outsiders. Its servants speak of it reverently, angrily, despitefully or enthusiastically as "The Company"; and they never omit the big, big C. Men must have treated the Honorable the East India Company in something the same fashion ages ago. "The Company" in Jamalpur is Lord Dufferin, all the members of Council, the Body-Guard, Sir Frederick Roberts, Mr. Westland, whose name is at the bottom of the currency notes, the Oriental Life Assurance Company, and the

Bengal Government all rolled into one. At first, when a stranger enters this life, he is inclined to scoff and ask, in his ignorance, "*What* is this Company that you talk so much about?" Later on, he ceases to scoff; for the Company is a "big" thing—almost big enough to satisfy an American.

Ere beginning to describe its doings, let it be written and repeated several times hereafter, that the E. I. R. passenger carriages, and especially the second class, are just now horrid—being filthy and unwashen, dirty to look at, and dirty to live in. Having cast this small stone, we will examine Jamalpur. When it was laid out, in or before the Mutiny year, its designers allowed room for growth, and made the houses of one general design—some of brick, some of stone, some three, four, and six roomed, some single men's barracks and some two-storied—all for the use of the employés. King's Road, Prince's Road, Queen's Road, and Victoria Road—Jamalpur is loyal—cut the breadth of the station; and Albert Road, Church Street, and Steam Road the length of it. Neither on these roads or on any of the cool-shaded smaller ones is anything unclean or unsightly to be found. There is a dreary village in the neighborhood which is said to make the most of any cholera that may be going, but Jamalpur itself is specklessly and spotlessly neat. From St. Mary's Church to the railway station, and from the buildings where they print

daily about half a lakh of tickets, to the ringing, roaring, rattling workshops, everything has the air of having been cleaned up at ten that very morning and put under a glass case. There is a holy calm about the roads—totally unlike anything in an English manufacturing town. Wheeled conveyances are few, because every man's bungalow is close to his work, and when the day has begun and the offices of the "Loco." and "Traffic" have soaked up their thousands of natives and hundreds of Europeans, you shall pass under the dappled shadows of the trees, hearing nothing louder than the croon of some bearer playing with a child in the veranda or the faint tinkle of a piano. This is pleasant, and produces an impression of Watteau-like refinement tempered with Arcadian simplicity. The dry, anguished howl of the "buzzer," the big steam whistle, breaks the hush, and all Jamalpur is alive with the tramping of tiffin-seeking feet. The Company gives one hour for meals between eleven and twelve. On the stroke of noon there is another rush back to the works or the offices, and Jamalpur sleeps through the afternoon till four or half-past, and then rouses for tennis at the institute.

In the hot weather it splashes in the swimming bath, or reads, for it has a library of several thousand books. One of the most flourishing lodges in the Bengal jurisdiction—"St. George in the East"—lives at Jamalpur,

and meets twice a month. Its members point out with justifiable pride that all the fittings were made by their own hands; and the lodge in its accouterments and the energy of the craftsmen can compare with any in India. But the institute is the central gathering place, and its half-dozen tennis-courts and neatly-laid-out grounds seem to be always full. Here, if a stranger could judge, the greater part of the flirtation of Jamalpur is carried out, and here the dashing apprentice—the apprentices are the liveliest of all—learns that there are problems harder than any he studies at the night school, and that the heart of a maiden is more inscrutable than the mechanism of a locomotive. On Tuesdays and Fridays, the volunteers parade. A and B Companies, 150 strong in all, of the E. I. R. Volunteers, are stationed here with the band. Their uniform, gray with red facings, is not lovely, but they know how to shoot and drill. They have to. The "Company" makes it a condition of service that a man must be a volunteer; and volunteer in something more than name he must be, or some one will ask the reason why. Seeing that there are no regulars between Howrah and Dinapore, the "Company" does well in exacting this toll. Some of the old soldiers are wearied of drill, some of the youngsters don't like it, but—the way they entrain and detrain is worth seeing. They are as mobile a corps as can be desired, and perhaps ten or twelve years

hence the Government may possibly be led to take a real interest in them and spend a few thousand rupees in providing them with real soldiers' kits—not uniform and rifle merely. Their ranks include all sorts and conditions of men—heads of the "Loco." and "Traffic," the "Company" is no respecter of rank—clerks in the "audit," boys from mercantile firms at home, fighting with the intricacies of time, fare, and freight tables; guards who have grown gray in the service of the Company; mail and passenger drivers with nerves of cast-iron, who can shoot through a long afternoon without losing temper or flurrying; light-blue East Indians; Tyne-side men, slow of speech and uncommonly strong in the arm; lathy apprentices who have not yet "filled out"; fitters, turners, foremen, full assistant, and sub-assistant station-masters, and a host of others. In the hands of the younger men the regulation Martini-Henri naturally goes off the line occasionally on hunting expeditions.

There is a twelve-hundred yards' range running down one side of the station, and the condition of the grass by the firing butts tells its own tale. Scattered in the ranks of the volunteers are a fair number of old soldiers, for the Company has a weakness for recruiting from the Army for its guards who may, in time, become station-masters. A good man from the Army, with his papers all correct and certificates from his commanding

officer, can, after depositing twenty pounds to pay his home passage, in the event of his services being dispensed with, enter the Company's service on something less than one hundred rupees a month and rise in time to four hundred as a station-master. A railway bungalow—and they are as substantially built as the engines—will cost him more than one-ninth of the pay of his grade, and the Provident Fund provides for his latter end.

Think for a moment of the number of men that a line running from Howrah to Delhi must use, and you will realize what an enormous amount of patronage the Company holds in its hands. Naturally a father who has worked for the line expects the line to do something for the son; and the line is not backward in meeting his wishes where possible. The sons of old servants may be taken on at fifteen years of age, or thereabouts, as apprentices in the "shops," receiving twenty rupees in the first and fifty in the last year of their indentures. Then they come on the books as full "men" on perhaps Rs. 65 a month, and the road is open to them in many ways. They may become foremen of departments on Rs. 500 a month, or drivers earning with overtime Rs. 370; or if they have been brought into the audit or the traffic, they may control innummerable Babus and draw several hundreds of rupees monthly; or, at eighteen or nineteen, they may be ticket-collectors, working up to the grade of guard, etc. Every

rank of the huge, human hive has a desire to see its sons placed properly, and the native workmen, about three thousand, in the locomotive department only, are, said one man, "making a family affair of it altogether. You see all those men turning brass and looking after the machinery? They've all got relatives, and a lot of 'em own land out Monghyr way close to us. They bring on their sons as soon as they are old enough to do anything, and the Company rather encourages it. You see the father is in a way responsible for his son, and he'll teach him all he knows, and in that way the Company has a hold on them all. You've no notion how sharp a native is when he's working on his own hook. All the district round here, right up to Monghyr, is more or less dependent on the railway."

The Babus in the traffic department, in the stores, issue department, in all the departments where men sit through the long, long Indian day among ledgers, and check and pencil and deal in figures and items and rupees, may be counted by hundreds. Imagine the struggle among them to locate their sons in comfortable cane-bottomed chairs, in front of a big pewter inkstand and stacks of paper! The Babus make beautiful accountants, and if we could only see it, a merciful Providence has made the Babu for figures and detail. Without him, the dividends of any company would be eaten up by the expenses of English or city-bred clerks. The Babu is a great

man, and, to respect him, you must see five score or so of him in a room a hundred yards long, bending over ledgers, ledgers, and yet more ledgers—silent as the Sphinx and busy as a bee. He is the lubricant of the great machinery of the Company whose ways and works cannot be dealt with in a single scrawl.

CHAPTER II.

THE SHOPS.

THE railway folk, like the army and civilian castes, have their own language and life, which an outsider cannot hope to understand. For instance, when Jamalpur refers to itself as being "on the long siding," a lengthy explanation is necessary before the visitor grasps the fact that the whole of the two hundred and thirty odd miles of the loop from Luckeeserai to Kanu-Junction *via* Bhagalpur is thus contemptuously treated. Jamalpur insists that it is out of the world, and makes this an excuse for being proud of itself and all its institutions. But in one thing it is badly, disgracefully provided. At a moderate estimate there must be about two hundred Europeans with their families in this place. They can, and do, get their small supplies from Calcutta, but they are dependent on the tender mercies of the bazaar for

their meat, which seems to be hawked from door to door. There is a Raja who owns or has an interest in the land on which the station stands, and he is averse to cow-killing. For these reasons, Jamalpur is not too well supplied with good meat, and what it wants is a decent meat-market with cleanly controlled slaughtering arrangements. The "Company," who gives grants to the schools and builds the institutes and throws the shadow of its protection all over the place, might help this scheme forward.

The heart of Jamalpur is the "shops," and here a visitor will see more things in an hour than he can understand in a year. Steam Street very appropriately leads to the forty or fifty acres that the "shops" cover, and to the busy silence of the loco. superintendent's office, where a man must put down his name and his business on a slip of paper before he can penetrate into the Temple of Vulcan. About three thousand five hundred men are in the "shops," and, ten minutes after the day's work has begun, the assistant superintendent knows exactly how many are "in." The heads of departments—silent, heavy-handed men, captains of five hundred or more—have their names fairly printed on a board which is exactly like a pool-marker. They "star a life" when they come in, and their few names alone represent salaries to the extent of six thousand a month. They are men worth hearing deferentially. They

hail from Manchester and the Clyde, and the great iron-works of the North: pleasant as cold water in a thirsty land is it to hear again the full Northumbrian burr or the long-drawn Yorkshire "aye." Under their great gravity of demeanor—a man who is in charge of a few lakhs' worth of plant cannot afford to be riotously mirthful—lurks melody and humor. They can sing like north-countrymen, and in their hours of ease go back to the speech of the iron countries they have left behind, when "Ab o' th' yate" and all "Ben Briarly's" shrewd wit shakes the warm air of Bengal with deep-chested laughter. Hear "Ruglan' Toon," with a chorus as true as the fall of trip-hammers, and fancy that you are back again in the smoky, rattling, ringing North!

But this is the "unofficial" side. Go forward through the gates under the mango trees, and set foot at once in sheds which have as little to do with mangoes as a locomotive with Lakshmi. "The "buzzer" howls, for it is nearly tiffin time. There is a rush from every quarter of the shops, a cloud of flying natives, and a procession of more sedately pacing Englishmen, and in three short minutes you are left absolutely alone among arrested wheels and belts, pulleys, cranks, and cranes—in a silence only broken by the soft sigh of a far-away steam-valve or the cooing of pigeons. You are, by favor freely granted, at liberty to wander anywhere you please through the deserted works

Walk into a huge, brick-built, tin-roofed stable, capable of holding twenty-four locomotives under treatment, and see what must be done to the Iron Horse once in every three years if he is to do his work well. On reflection, Iron Horse is wrong. An engine is a she—as distinctly feminine as a ship or a mine. Here stands the *Echo*, her wheels off, resting on blocks, her underside machinery taken out, and her side scrawled with mysterious hieroglyphics in chalk. An enormous green-painted iron harness-rack bears her piston and eccentric rods, and a neatly painted board shows that such and such Englishmen are the fitter, assistant, and apprentice engaged in editing that *Echo*. An engine seen from the platform and an engine viewed from underneath are two very different things. The one is as unimpressive as a cart; the other as imposing as a man-of-war in the yard.

In this manner is an engine treated for navicular, laminitis, back-sinew, or whatever it is that engines most suffer from. No. 607, we will say, goes wrong at Dinapore, Assensole, Buxar, or wherever it may be, after three years' work. The place she came from is stencilled on the boiler, and the foreman examines her. Then he fills in a hospital sheet, which bears one hundred and eighty printed heads under which an engine can come into the shops. No. 607 needs repair in only one hundred and eighteen particulars, ranging from mud-hole-flanges and blower-

cocks to lead-plugs, and platform brackets which have shaken loose. This certificate the foreman signs, and it is framed near the engine for the benefit of the three Europeans and the eight or nine natives who have to mend No. 607. To the ignorant the superhuman wisdom of the examiner seems only equalled by the audacity of the two men and the boy who are to undertake what is frivolously called the "job". No. 607, is in a sorely mangled condition, but 403 is much worse. She is reduced to a shell—is a very elle-woman of an engine, bearing only her funnel, the iron frame and the saddle that supports the boiler.

Four-and-twenty engines in every stage of decomposition stand in one huge shop. A traveling crane runs overhead, and the men have hauled up one end of a bright vermilion loco. The effect is the silence of a scornful stare—just such a look as a colonel's portly wife gives through her *pince-nez* at the audacious subaltern. Engines are the "livest" things that man ever made. They glare through their spectacle-plates, they tilt their noses contemptuously, and when their insides are gone they adorn themselves with red lead, and leer like decayed beauties: and in the Jamalpur works there is no escape from them. The shops can hold fifty without pressure, and on occasion as many again. Everywhere there are engines, and everywhere brass domes lie about on the ground like huge hel-

mets in a pantomine. The silence is the weirdest touch of all. Some sprightly soul—an apprentice be sure—has daubed in red lead on the end of an iron-tool-box a caricature of some friend who is evidently a riveter. The picture has all the interest of an Egyptian cartouche, for it shows that men have been here, and that the engines do not have it all their own way.

And so, out in the open, away from the three great sheds, between and under more engines, till we strike a wilderness of lines all converging to one turn-table. Here be elephant-stalls ranged round a half-circle, and in each stall stands one engine, and each engine stares at the turn-table. A stolid and disconcerting company is this ring-of-eyes monsters; 324, 432, and 8 are shining like toys. They are ready for their turn of duty, and are as spruce as hansoms. Lacquered chocolate, picked out with black, red, and white, is their dress, and delicate lemon graces the ceiling of the cabs. The driver should be a gentleman in evening dress with white kid gloves, and there should be gold-headed champagne bottles in the spick and span tenders. Huckleberry Finn says of a timber raft, "It amounted to something being captain of that raft." Thrice enviable is the man who, drawing Rs. 120 a month, is allowed to make Rs. 150 overtime out of locus. Nos. 324, 422, or 8. Fifty yards beyond this gorgeous trinity are ten to twelve engines who have but in to Jamalpur

to bait. They are alive, their fires are lighted, and they are swearing and purring and growling one at another as they stand alone. Here is evidently one of the newest type—No. 25, a giant who has just brought the mail in and waits to be cleaned up preparatory to going out afresh.

The tiffin hour has ended. The buzzer blows, and with a roar, a rattle, and a clang the shops take up their toil. The hubbub that followed on the prince's kiss to the sleeping beauty was not so loud or sudden. Experience, with a foot-rule in his pocket, authority in his port, and a merry twinkle in his eye, comes up and catches Ignorance walking gingerly round No. 25. "That's one of the best we have," says Experience, "a four-wheeled coupled bogie they call her. She's by Dobbs. She's done her hundred and fifty miles to-day; and she'll run in to Rampore Haut this afternoon; then she'll rest a day and be cleaned up. Roughly, she does her three hundred miles in the four-and-twenty hours. She's a beauty. She's out from home, but we can build our own engines—all except the wheels. We're building ten locos. now, and we've got a dozen boilers ready if you care to look at them. How long does a loco. last? That's just as may be. She will do as much as her driver lets her. Some men play the mischief with a loco. and some handle 'em properly. Our drivers prefer Hawthorne's old four-wheeled coupled engines

because they give the least bother. There is one in that shed, and its a good 'un to travel. But eighty thousand miles generally sees the gloss off an engine, and she goes into the shops to be overhauled and refitted and re-planed, and a lot of things that you wouldn't understand if I told you about them. No. 1, the first loco. on the line, is running still, but very little of the original engine must be left by this time. That one there, came out in the Mutiny year. She's by Slaughter and Grunning, and she's built for speed in front of a light load. French-looking sort of thing, isn't she? That's because her cylinders are on a tilt. We used her for the mail once, but the mail has grown heavier, and heavier, and now we use six-wheeled coupled eighteen-inch, inside cylinder, 45-ton locos. to shift thousand-ton trains. *No!* All locos. aren't alike. It isn't merely pulling a lever. The Company likes its drivers to know their locos., and a man will keep his Hawthorne for two or three years. The more mileage he gets out of her before she has to be overhauled the better man he is. It pays to let a man have his fancy engine. A man must take an interest in his loco., and that means she must belong to him. Some locos. won't do anything, even if you coax aud humor them. I don't think there are any unlucky ones now, but some years ago No. 31 wasn't popular. The drivers went sick or took leave when they were told off for her. She killed her driver

on the Jubbulpore line, she left the rails at Kajra, she did something or other at Rampur Haut, and Lord knows what she didn't do or try to do in other places! All the drivers fought shy of her, and in the end she disappeared. They said she was condemned, but I shouldn't wonder if the Company changed her number quietly, and changed the luck at the same time. You see, the Government Inspector comes and looks at our stock now and again, and when an engine's condemned he puts his dhobimark on her, and she's broken up. Well, No. 31 was condemned, but there was a whisper that they only shifted her number, and ran her out again. When the drivers didn't know, there were no accidents. I don't think we've got an unlucky one running now. Some are different from others, but there are no man-eaters. Yes, a driver of the mail *is* somebody. He can make Rs. 370 a month if he's a covenanted man. We get a lot of our drivers in the country, and we don't import from England as much as we did. 'Stands to reason that, now there's more competition both among lines and in the labor market, the Company can't afford to be as generous as it used to be. It doesn't cheat a man though. It's this way with the drivers. A native driver gets about Rs. 20 a month, and in his way he's supposed to be good enough for branch work and shunting and such. Well, an English driver'll get from Rs. 80 to Rs. 220, and overtime. The English driver knows

what the native gets, and in time they tell the driver that the native'll improve. The driver has that to think of. You see? That's competition!

Experience returns to the engine-sheds, now full of clamor, and enlarges on the beauties of sick locomotives. The fitters and the assistants and the apprentices are hammering and punching and gauging, and otherwise technically disporting themselves round their enormous patients, and their language, as caught in snatches, is beautifully unintelligible.

But one flying sentence goes straight to the heart. It is the cry of Humanity over the task of Life, done into unrefined English. An apprentice, grimed to his eyebrows, his cloth cap well on the back of his curly head and his hands deep in his pockets, is sitting on the edge of a tool-box ruefully regarding the very much disorganized engine whose slave is he. A handsome boy, this apprentice, and well made. He whistles softly between his teeth, and his brow puckers. Then he addresses the engine, half in expostulation and half in despair, "Oh, you condemned old female dog!" He puts the sentence more crisply—much more crisply—and Ignorance chuckles sympathetically.

Ignorance also is puzzled over these engines.

CHAPTER III.

VULCAN'S FORGE.

In the wilderness of the railway shops—and machinery that planes and shaves, and bevels and stamps, and punches and hoists and nips—the first idea that occurs to an outsider, when he has seen the men who people the place, is that it must be the birthplace of inventions—a pasture-ground of fat patents. If a writing-man, who plays with shadows and dresses dolls that others may laugh at their antics, draws help and comfort and new methods of working old ideas from the stored shelves of a library, how, in the name of Commonsense, his god, can a doing-man, whose mind is set upon things that snatch a few moments from flying Time or put power into weak hands, refrain from going forward and adding new inventions to the hundreds among which he daily moves?

Appealed to on this subject, Experience, who had served the E. I. R. loyally for many years, held his peace. "We don't go in much for patents; but," he added, with a praiseworthy attempt to turn the conversation, "we can build you any mortal thing you like. We've got the *Bradford Leslie* steamer for the

Sahib-gunge ferry. Come and see the brass-work for her bows. It's in the casting-shed."

It would have been cruel to have pressed Experience further, and Ignorance, to foredate matters a little, went about to discover why experience shied off this question, and why the men of Jamalpur had not each and all invented and patented something. He won his information in the end, but did not come from Jamalpur. *That* must be clearly understood. It was found anywhere you please between Howrah and Hoti Mardan; and here it is that all the world may admire a prudent and far-sighted Board of Directors. Once upon a time, as every one in the profession knows, two men invented the D. and O. sleeper—cast iron of five pieces, very serviceable. The men were in the Company's employ, and their masters said: "Your brains are ours. Hand us over those sleepers." Being of pay and position, D. and O. made some sort of resistance and got a royalty or a bonus. At any rate, the Company had to pay for its sleepers. But thereafter, and the condition exists to this day, they caused it to be written in each servant's covenant, that if by chance he invented aught, his invention was to belong to the Company. Providence has mercifully arranged that no man or syndicate of men can buy the "holy spirit of man" outright without suffering in some way or another just as much as the purchase. America fully, and Germany in part, recognizes this law. The E. I. Rail-

way's breach of it is thoroughly English. They say, or it is said of them that they say, "We are afraid of our men, who belong to us, wasting their time on trying to invent."

Is it wholly impossible, then, for men of mechanical experience and large sympathies to check the mere patent-hunter and bring forward the man with an idea? Is there no supervision in the "shops," or have the men who play tennis and billiards at the institute not a minute which they can rightly call their very own? Would it ruin the richest Company in India to lend their model-shop and their lathes to half a dozen, or, for the matter of that, half a hundred, abortive experiments? A Massachusetts organ factory, a Racine buggy shop, an Oregon lumber-yard, would laugh at the notion. An American toy-maker might swindle an employé after the invention, but he would in his own interests help the man to "see what comes of the thing." Surely a wealthy, a powerful and, as all Jamulpur bears witness, a considerate Company might cut that clause out of the covenant and await the issue. There would be quite enough jealousy between man and man, grade and grade, to keep down all but the keenest souls; and, with due respect to the steam-hammer and the rolling-mill, we have not yet made machinery perfect. The "shops" are not likely to spawn unmanageable Stephensons or grasping Brunels; but in the minor turns of mechanical thought that find concrete expressions in links, axle-boxes,

joint packings, valves, and spring-stirrups something might—something would—be done were the practical prohibition removed. Will a North countryman give you anything but warm hospitality for nothing? Or if you claim from him overtime service as a right, will he work zealously? "Onything but t' brass," is his motto, and his ideas are his "brass."

Gentlemen in authority, if this should meet your august eyes, spare it a minute's thought, and, clearing away the floridity, get to the heart of the mistake and see if it cannot be rationally put right. Above all, remember that Jamulpur supplied no information. It was as mute as an oyster. There is no one within your jurisdiction to—ahem—— "drop upon."

Let us, after this excursion into the offices, return to the shops and only ask Experience such questions as he can without disloyalty answer.

"We used once," says he, leading to the foundry, "to sell our old rails and import new ones. Even when we used 'em for roof beams and so on, we had more than we knew what to do with. Now we have got rolling-mills, and we use the rails to make tie-bars for the D. and O. sleepers and all sorts of things. We turn out five hundred D. and O. sleepers a day. Altogether, we use about seventy-five tons of our own iron a month here. Iron in Calcutta costs about five-eight

a hundred-weight; our costs between three four and three-eight, and on that item alone we save three thousand a month. Don't ask me how many miles of rails we own. There are fifteen hundred miles of line, and you can make your own calculation. All those things like babies' graves, down in that shed, are the moulds for the D. and O. sleepers. We test them by dropping three hundred weight and three hundred quarters of iron on top of them from a height of seven feet, or eleven sometimes. They don't often smash. We have a notion here that our iron is as good as the Home stuff."

A sleek, white, and brindled pariah thrusts himself into the conversation. His house appears to be on the warm ashes of the bolt-maker. This is a horrible machine, which chews red-hot iron bars and spits them out perfect bolts. Its manners are disgusting, and it gobbles over its food.

"Hi, Jack!" says Experience, stroking the interloper, "you've been trying to break your leg again. That's the dog of the works. At least he makes believe that the works belong to him. He'll follow any one of us about the shops as far as the gate, but never a step further. You can see he's in first-class condition. The boys give him his ticket, and, one of these days, he'll try to get on to the Company's books as a regular worker. He's too clever to live." Jack heads the procession as far as the walls of the rolling-shed and

then returns to his machinery room. He waddles with fatness and despises strangers.

"How would you like to be hot-potted there?" says Experience, who has read and who is enthusiastic over *She*, as he points to the great furnaces whence the slag is being dragged out by hooks. "Here is the old material going into the furnace in that big iron bucket. Look at the scraps of iron. There's an old D. and O. sleeper, there's a lot of clips from a cylinder, there's a lot of snipped-up rails, there's a driving-wheel block, there's an old hook, and a sprinkling of boiler-plates and rivets."

The bucket is tipped into the furnace with a thunderous roar and the slag below pours forth more quickly. "An engine," says Experience, reflectively, "can run over herself so to say. After she's broken up she is made into sleepers for the line. You'll see how she's broken up later." A few paces further on, semi-nude demons are capering over strips of glowing hot iron which are put into a mill as rails and emerge as thin, shapely tie-bars. The natives wear rough sandals and some pretense of aprons, but the greater part of them is "all face." "As I said before," says Experience, "a native's cuteness when he's working on ticket is something startling. Beyond occasionally hanging on to a red-hot bar too long and so letting their pincers be drawn through the mills, these men take precious good care not to go wrong. Our machinery

is fenced and guard-railed as much as possible, and these men don't get caught up by the belting. In the first place, they're careful—the father warns the son and so on—and in the second, there's nothing about 'em for the belting to catch on unless the man shoves his hand in. Oh, a native's no fool! He knows that it doesn't do to be foolish when he's dealing with a crane or a driving-wheel. You're looking at all those chopped rails? We make our iron as they blend baccy. We mix up all sorts to get the required quality. Those rails have just been chopped by this tobacco-cutter thing." Experience bends down and sets a vicious-looking, parrot-headed beam to work. There is a quiver—a snap—and a dull smash and a heavy rail is nipped in two like a stick of barley-sugar.

Elsewhere, a bull-nosed hydraulic cutter is rail-cutting as if it enjoyed the fun. In another shed stand the steam-hammers; the unemployed ones murmuring and muttering to themselves, as is the uncanny custom of all steam-souled machinery. Experience, with his hand on a long lever, makes one of the monsters perform; and though Ignorance knows that a man designed and men do continually build steam-hammers, the effect is as though Experience were maddening a chained beast. The massive block slides down the guides, only to pause hungrily an inch above the anvil, or restlessly throb through a foot and a half of space, each motion being con-

trolled by an almost imperceptible handling of the levers. "When these things are newly overhauled, you can regulate your blows to within an eighth of an inch," says Experience. "We had a foreman here once who could work 'em beautifully. He had the touch. One day a visitor, no end of a swell in a tall, white hat, came round the works, and our foreman borrowed the hat and brought the hammer down just enough to press the nap and no more. 'How wonderful!' said the visitor, putting his hand carelessly upon this lever rod here." Experience suits the action to the word and the hammer thunders on the anvil. "Well, you can guess for yourself. Next minute there wasn't enough left of that tall, white hat to make a postage-stamp of. Steam-hammers aren't things to play with. Now we'll go over to the stores . . ."

Whatever apparent disorder there might have been in the works, the store department is as clean as a new pin, and stupefying in its naval order. Copper plates, bar, angle, and rod iron, duplicate cranks and slide bars, the piston rods of the *Bradford Leslie* steamer, engine grease, files, and hammer-heads—every conceivable article, from leather laces of beltings to head-lamps, necessary for the due and proper working of a long line, is stocked, stacked, piled, and put away in appropriate compartments. In the midst of it all, neck deep in ledgers and indent forms, stands the many-handed Babu, the steam of the engine

whose power extends from Howrah to Ghaziabad.

The Company does everything, and knows everything. The gallant apprentice may be a wild youth with an earnest desire to go occasionally "upon the bend." But three times a week, between 7 and 8 P.M., he must attend the night-school and sit at the feet of M. Bonnaud, who teaches him mechanics and statics so thoroughly that even the awful Government Inspector is pleased. And when there is no night-school the Company will by no means wash its hands of its men out of working-hours. No man can be violently restrained from going to the bad if he insists upon it, but in the service of the Company a man has every warning; his escapades are known, and a judiciously arranged transfer sometimes keeps a good fellow clear of the down-grade. No one can flatter himself that in the multitude he is overlooked, or believe that between 4 P.M. and 9 A.M. he is at liberty to misdemean himself. Sooner or later, but generally sooner, his goings-on are known, and he is reminded that "Britons never shall be slaves"—to things that destroy good work as well as souls. Maybe the Company acts only in its own interest, but the result is good.

Best and prettiest of the many good and pretty things in Jamalpur is the institute of a Saturday when the Volunteer Band is playing and the tennis courts are full and the baby-dom of Jamalpur—fat, sturdy children—frolic

round the band-stand. The people dance—but big as the institute is, it is getting too small for their dances—they act, they play billiards, they study their newspapers, they play cards and everything else, and they flirt in a sumptuous building, and in the hot weather the gallant apprentice ducks his friend in the big swimming-bath. Decidedly the railway folk make their lives pleasant.

Let us go down southward to the big Giridih collieries and see the coal that feeds the furnace that smelts the iron that makes the sleeper that bears the loco. that pulls the carriage that holds the freight that comes from the country that is made richer by the Great Company Badahur, the East Indian Railway.

IN AN OPIUM FACTORY

On the banks of the Ganges, forty miles below Benares as the crow flies, stands the Ghazipur Factory, an opium mint as it were, whence issue the precious cakes that are to replenish the coffers of the Indian Government. The busy season is setting in, for with April the opium comes in from the districts after having run the gauntlet of the district officers of the Opium Department, who will pass it as fit for use. Then the really serious work begins, under a roasting sun. The opium arrives by *challans*, regiments of one hundred jars, each holding one maund, and each packed in a basket and sealed atop. The district officer submits forms—never was such a place for forms as the Ghazipur Factory—showing the quality and weight of each pot, and with the jars comes a person responsible for the safe carriage of the string, their delivery, and their virginity. If any pots are broken or tampered with, an unfortunate individual called the import-officer, and appointed to work like a horse from dawn till dewy eve, must examine the man in charge of the *challan* and reduce his statement to writing. Fancy getting any

native to explain how a jar has been smashed! But the Perfect Flower is about as valuable as silver.

Then all the pots have to be weighed, and the weight of each pot is recorded on the pot, in a book, and goodness knows where else, and every one has to sign certificates that the weighing is correct. The pots have been weighed once in the district and once in the factory. None the less a certain number of them are taken at random and weighed afresh before they are opened. This is only the beginning of the long series of checks. Then the testing begins. Every single pot has to be tested for quality. A native, called the *purkhea*, drives his fist into the opium, rubs and smells it, and calls out the class for the benefit of the opium examiner. A sample picked between finger and thumb is thrown into a jar, and if the opium examiner thinks the *purkhea* has said sooth, the class of that jar is marked in chalk, and everything is entered in a book. Every ten samples are put in a locked box with duplicate keys, and sent over to the laboratory for assay. With the tenth boxful—and this marks the end of the *challan* of a hundred jars—the Englishman in charge of the testing signs the test-paper, and enters the name of the native tester and sends it over to the laboratory. For convenience' sake, it may be as well to say that, unless distinctly stated to the contrary, every single thing in Ghazipur is locked, and every opera-

tion is conducted under more than police supervision.

In the laboratory each set of ten samples is thoroughly mixed by hand; a quarter-ounce lump is then tested for starch adulteration by iodine, which turns the decoction blue, and, if necessary, for gum adulteration by alcohol, which makes the decoction filmy. If adulteration be shown, all the ten pots of that set are tested separately till the sinful pot is discovered. Over and above this test, three samples of one hundred grains each are taken from the mixed set of ten samples, dried on a steam table, and then weighed for consistence. The result is written down in a ten-columned form in the assay register, and by the mean result are those ten pots paid for. This, after everything has been done in duplicate and countersigned, completes the test and assay. If a district officer has classed the opium in a glaringly wrong way, he is thus caught and reminded of his error. No one trusts any one in Ghazipur. They are always weighing, testing, and assaying.

Before the opium can be used it must be "alligated" in big vats. The pots are emptied into these, and special care is taken that none of the drug sticks to the hands of the coolies. Opium has a knack of doing this, and therefore coolies are searched at most inopportune moments. There are a good many Mahometans in Ghazipur, and they would all like a little opium. The pots after

emptying are smashed up and scraped, and heaved down the steep river-bank of the factory, where they help to keep the Ganges in its place, so many are they and the little earthen bowls in which the opium cakes are made. People are forbidden to wander about the river-front of the factory in search of remnants of opium on the shards. There are no remnants, but people will not credit this. After vatting, the big vats, holding from one to three thousand maunds, are probed with test-rods, and the samples are treated just like the samples of the *challans*, everybody writing everything in duplicate and signing it. Having secured the mean consistence of each vat, the requisite quantity of each blend is weighed out, thrown into an alligating vat, of 250 maunds and worked up by the feet of coolies.

This completes the working of the opium. It is now ready to be made into cakes after a final assay. Man has done nothing to improve it since it streaked the capsule of the poppy—this mysterious drug. April, May, June are the months for receiving and manufacturing opium, and in the winter months comes the packing and the despatch.

At the beginning of the cold weather Ghazipur holds, locked up, a trifle, say, of three and a half million sterling in opium. Now, there may be only a paltry three-quarters of a million on hand, and that is going out at the rate per diem of one Viceroy's salary for two and a half years.

There are ranges and ranges of gigantic godowns, huge barns that can hold over half a million pounds' worth of opium. There are acres of bricked floor, regiments on regiments of chests; and yet more godowns and more godowns. The heart of the whole is the laboratory, which is full of the sick faint smell of an opium-joint where they sell *chandu*. This makes Ghazipur indignant. "That's the smell of pure opium. We don't need *chandu* here. You don't know what real opium smells like. *Chandu-khana* indeed! That's refined opium under treatment for morphia, and cocaine, and perhaps narcotine." "Very well, let's see some of the real opium made for the China market." "We shan't be making any for another six weeks at earliest; but we can show you one cake made, and you must imagine two hundred and fifty men making 'em as hard as they can—one every four minutes."

A Sirdar of cake-makers is called, and appears with a miniature wash-board, on which he sets a little square box of dark wood, a tin cup, an earthen bowl, and a mass of poppy-petal cakes. A larger earthen bowl holds what looks like bad Cape tobacco.

"What's that?"

"Trash—dried poppy-leaves, not petals, broken up and used for packing the cakes in. You'll see presently." The cake-maker sits down and receives a lump of opium, weighed out, of one seer seven chittacks and

a half, neither more nor less. "That's pure opium of seventy consistence." Every allowance is weighed.

"What are they weighing that brown water for?"

"That's *lewa*—thin opium at fifty consistence. It's the paste. He gets four chittacks and a half of it." "And do they weigh the petal-cakes?" "Of course." The Sirdar takes a brass hemispherical cup and wets it with a rag. Then he tears a petal-cake, which resembles a pancake, across so that it fits into the cup without a wrinkle, and pastes it with the thin opium, the *lewa*. After this his actions become incomprehensible, but there is evidently a deep method in them. Pancake after pancake is torn across, dressed with *lewa*, and pressed down into the cups; the fringes hanging over the edge of the bowl. He takes half-pancakes and fixes them skilfully, picking now first-class and now second-class ones, for there are three kinds of them. Everything is gummed into everything else with the *lewa*, and he presses all down by twisting his wrists inside the bowl till the bowl is lined half an inch deep with them, and they all glisten with the greasy *lewa*. He now takes up an ungummed pancake and fits in carefully all round The opium is dropped tenderly upon this, and a curious washing motion of the hand follows. The mass of opium is drawn up into a cone as one by one the Sirdar picks up the overlapping portions of the cakes that hung outside

the bowl and plasters them against the drug for an outside coat. He tucks in the top of the cone with his thumbs, brings the fringe of cake over to close the opening, and pastes fresh leaves upon all. The cone has now taken a spherical shape, and he gives it the finishing touch by gumming a large *chupatti*, one of the "moon" kind, set aside from the first, on the top, so deftly that no wrinkle is visible. The cake is now complete, and all the Celestials of the Middle Kingdom shall not be able to disprove that it weighs two seers one and three-quarter chittacks, with a play of half a chittack for the personal equation.

The Sirdar takes it up and rubs it in the branlike poppy trash of the big bowl, so that two-thirds of it are powdered with the trash and one-third is fair and shiny poppy-petal. "That is the difference between a Ghazipur and a Patna cake. Our cakes have always an unpowdered head. The Patna ones are rolled in trash all over. You can tell them anywhere by that mark. Now we'll cut this one open and you can see how a section looks." One-half of an inch, as nearly as may be, is the thickness of the shell all round the cake, and even in this short time so firmly has the *lewa* set that any attempt at sundering the skin is followed by the rending of the poppy-petals that compose the *chupatti*. "Now you've seen in detail what a cake is made of—that is to say, pure opium 70 consistence, poppy-petal

pancakes, *lewa* of 52.50 consistence, and a powdering of poppy trash."

"But why are you so particular about the shell?"

Because of the China market. The Chinaman likes every inch of the stuff we send him, and uses it. He boils the shell and gets out every grain of the *lewa* used to gum it together. He smokes that after he has dried it. Roughly speaking, the value of the cake we've just cut open is two pound ten. All the time it is in our hands we have to look after it and check it and treat it as though at were gold. It mustn't have too much moisture in it, or it will swell and crack, and if it is too dry John Chinaman won't have it. He values his opuim for qualities just the opposite of those in Smyrna opium. Smyrna opium gives as much as ten per cent of morphia, and if nearly solid—90 consistence. Our opium does not give more than three or three and a half per cent of morphia on the average, and, as you know, it is only 70, or in Patna 75, consistence. That is the drug the Chinaman likes. He can get the maximum of extract out of it by soaking it in hot water, and he likes the flavor. He knows it is absolutely pure too, and it comes to him in good condition."

"But has nobody found out any patent way of making these cakes and putting skins on them by machinery?"

"Not *yet*. Poppy to poppy. There's nothing better. Here are a couple of cakes made

in 1849, when they tried experiments in wrapping them in paper and cloth. You can see that they are beautifully wrapped and sewn like cricket balls, but it would take about half an hour to make one cake, and we could not be sure of keeping the aroma in them. There is nothing like poppy plant for poppy drug."

And this is the way the drug, which yields such a splendid income to the Indian Government, is prepared.

Date Due
